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ABSTRACT

This packet of materials is designed to help Scottish teachers improve discipline in the secondary school and classroom. Based on research conducted by the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE), it serves as a starting point to review discipline policy and practice. The packet contains three booklets: (1) "Action on Discipline throughout the School," which concentrates on promoting effective discipline in the whole-school context and contains materials on policy review and development; (2) "Action on Discipline in the Classroom," which focuses on analyzing and improving discipline in day-to-day work of the classroom; and (3) "Scenarios," which contains five scenarios based on real-life situations. The first booklet contains five action-on-policy papers that offer practical suggestions to improve discipline and lists of resources and references. (LMI)

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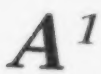
## HOW TO USE THE DISCIPLINE PACK

This booklet is part of a pack which aims to support schools' work in the important area of discipline. The pack contains two booklets. One (this booklet) concentrates on classroom discipline. The other (*Action on Discipline: Throughout the Secondary School)* focuses on discipline in the whole school. These booklets draw on key findings from SCRE research on discipline — research on the day-to-day realities of school life, to help schools improve discipline. The focus is on understanding what makes for effective discipline.

There are three symbols used to identify the three different kinds of support material for the booklets.



**Action on Policy Papers:** There are five of these. They suggest practical tasks which can help improve discipline. They emphasise the need to go beyond paper policy to active commitment and implementation of agreed changes in discipline practice.
They can be used to:

- help the school analyse its current discipline message
- involve the whole school community in improving discipline.

**Information Sheets:** There are three of these at the back of *Action on Discipline: Throughout the Secondary School.* They list some discipline resource packs for schools and offer a brief description of them. They also list some major books and articles on discipline.

**Scenarios:** There are five of these. They present descriptions of everyday classroom events. They are intended as a stimulus for discussion about teachers' classroom practice and about whole school discipline. No right answers are given. Teachers can use these scenarios to:

- consider their own ideas about what makes for effective discipline
- analyse the connections between discipline in their classrooms, subject departments and the school as a whole.

# ACTION ON DISCIPLINE

## *In the Secondary Classroom*

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*Scottish Office Education Department*
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# CONTENTS


*page*

**The Research** ..... ii
**Acknowledgements** ..... ii

**1 Getting Started** ..... 1

**2 Your Hidden Strengths** ..... 2
Why should teachers analyse classroom practice? ..... 2

**3 Analysing Action in the Classroom** ..... 4
Advance planning and preparation ..... 4
Reacting to events ..... 4
Quality planning ..... 5
Analysing your own practice ..... 5

**4 Weighing Up the Context** ..... 6
The importance of knowledge about the pupils ..... 6
Increasing your awareness of the conditions ..... 7
Conditions and their influence ..... 8

**5 Deciding on Goals** ..... 9
Goals ..... 9
Analysing your goals ..... 10
When goals conflict ..... 10

**6 Effective Learning from your Actions** ..... 12
Understanding effective classroom discipline ..... 12
Other possibilities ..... 13
In conclusion ..... 13

**7 Putting it all Together** ..... 14

## THE RESEARCH

The ideas and information in this support pack are based on the findings of research into discipline in Scottish schools carried out over a three-year period by the Scottish Council for Research in Education. The research reports are listed on page 19 of *Action on Discipline: Throughout the Secondary School.*

The examples and quotations used in the text are from real schools and teachers. Any names used are fictitious.


## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This pack would not have been possible without the help and support of a great many people. The teachers and pupils in schools who took part in SCRE research on discipline provided the foundation of the pack. It was refined and developed by the constructive criticism of members of an Advisory Committee and by teachers and parents who commented on the materials at a draft stage. The Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) commissioned the research and the development of the pack and we are grateful for its support.

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# GETTING STARTED

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This booklet focuses on classroom discipline. It uses findings from SCRE research to pinpoint the key factors contributing to effective discipline.

The booklet does not offer recipes for effective discipline. If such a recipe existed it would have been discovered by now! It provides a framework which helps teachers develop their analytical skills when dealing with discipline issues. The booklet provides ideas about how to:

- review your discipline strategies and their outcomes
- reflect on discipline in your classroom
- review the conditions which influence discipline in your classroom.

The booklet can be used to reflect on discipline success or failures:

- as a stimulus for discussion among experienced staff
- with student teachers
- with probationers
- with the whole-school booklet to show connections between whole-school policy and classroom practice.

## STRUCTURE

The booklet contains seven short chapters of which this is the first. Chapter 2 sets out the case for teachers analysing their classroom practice. Chapters 3–5 highlight particular features of practice to focus on:

- actions
- the classroom context, especially expectations about pupils
- goals.

Each of these suggests practical activities for teachers to heighten awareness of their classroom practice. Chapters 6 and 7 draw the previous sections together to present a framework for understanding classroom discipline.

## FINDING THE TIME

Teachers have many competing demands on their time and finding time for what might seem to be 'yet another initiative' could be difficult. Yet it is hard to imagine what could be more important than schools being happy and purposeful learning environments. Discipline is a key ingredient in such an environment. This booklet could be used:

- as part of planned in-service
- during mentoring time with students
- by pairs of teachers working together to help each other through discussion of the results of their analysis of classroom practice.

# 2

# YOUR HIDDEN STRENGTHS

Teachers have a fund of skills, expertise and knowledge about classroom discipline. They rarely make it explicit. Yet it is their greatest asset in promoting discipline.

Teachers are not in the habit of analysing how their skills work. They often have difficulty in talking about what is, for them, familiar and ordinary practice. They can find it difficult to explain to themselves, and to colleagues such as probationers or student teachers, why and how actions are effective.

Thinking about what works for you, why it works and how it promotes effective discipline lets you build on your successes. This type of reflection allows you to maintain your skills and develop new ones in a more focused way. Knowing when to use a particular technique and being conscious of why it works helps to maximise your chances of success.

## *WHY SHOULD TEACHERS ANALYSE CLASSROOM PRACTICE?*

It is not easy to give an account of what you do spontaneously, in the heat of the moment, or what you do routinely. This is how people act when they are busy getting on with the job. Unfortunately, there are costs in not being explicit about classroom practice. These are:

- ***Bad practice can persist***

  It is difficult to build on good practice and eliminate bad practice. Strengths and weaknesses in promoting effective classroom discipline are most visible when we are surprised by the out of the ordinary. Most of the time we are not aware of the knowledge and skills we use to maintain discipline. When we are aware of it, it is often a very fleeting awareness which fades away as we forget the details of the action.

- ***Inappropriate actions***

  When there is a discipline problem, not having access to a pool of explicit knowledge can slow down a response to the situation. This may force teachers to repeat their mistakes rather than learn from them and to try inappropriate strategies that from the outset may have little chance of success.

- ***Minimises skills and knowledge***

  It can be difficult to pass on knowledge about effective discipline to probationers and students. This leaves them open to the view that the right personality is everything and that the good teacher succeeds by magic, not hard work. Teachers tend to underplay the thinking and judgement they apply to classroom discipline because so much is routine and taken for granted.

- ***Restricts learning opportunities***

  One final cost of tacit knowledge is that it reduces the opportunity of learning from others. It discourages sharing experiences of success and portrays teaching as a private rather than a collaborative activity.

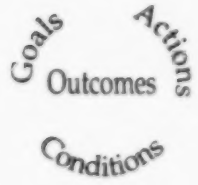
One student teacher sums up some of the costs of not talking about classroom practice. His first teaching practice was 'a disaster':

> *"I don't mind admitting it now, but that first teaching practice was a disaster. What made it worse was that I felt so isolated. I tried to talk to Diane my head of department but whenever we sat down to thrash things out it all seemed so formal — like an interview. I couldn't describe how I saw my discipline problems with that one awful class. I couldn't even think of the right questions to ask without making myself out to be a complete failure. When she works with her classes it looks easy and although she showed me some really good ways of settling them down to work I could never get them to work for me. We had quite a few arguments when she couldn't explain how she got them to work — her explanations were so vague."*

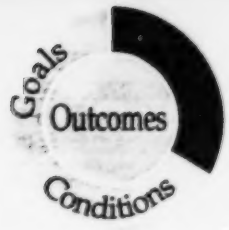
Skilled teachers can make effective discipline look easy. They often know more about their strategies and actions than they can say and they find it easier to communicate through actions rather than words. Their difficulty in making their knowledge explicit can be frustrating for less skilled colleagues or for student teachers who wish to learn from them. Both skilled teachers and teachers with difficulties need to develop ways of thinking about what they do. Even experienced teachers can meet difficult classes. Even in a well-motivated, happy class, there can be individual pupils who pose discipline problems for the teacher. A group of experienced teachers, sharing their knowledge about classroom practice can be of immense benefit to each other as well as to inexperienced colleagues.

Chapters 3–5 suggest how you can make your knowledge explicit by analysing the steps towards good discipline. The three chapters focus on the three elements of good discipline:

- actions
- conditions
- goals.




In each section, practical activities are suggested. Chapter 6 then looks at outcomes and how you can build on what happens in your classroom. Analysing outcomes by looking at actions, conditions and goals will give you a framework for understanding classroom discipline. Chapter 7 suggests a basic exercise to strengthen awareness of how your actions, goals and classroom conditions affect each other.

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# ANALYSING ACTION IN THE CLASSROOM

Your first steps towards more effective classroom discipline will be to look at what you do with a class to promote discipline. Given that it is never easy to visualise yourself in action, it may be helpful to think about two kinds of actions that you take:

- advance planning and preparation
- reacting to classroom events.

## *ADVANCE PLANNING AND PREPARATION*

SCRE's research revealed that teachers who controlled classes well minimised opportunities for disruption. They did this by:

- planning lessons carefully
- making connections with previous work
- being in class before the pupils arrived
- ensuring equipment or materials needed were available and in working order
- having well established routines for behaviour, for example, the collection and return of home work
- establishing positive relationships with pupils, knowing their names interests and often family background.

These teachers prepared things in advance. They did not wait for something to happen before taking action. They also anticipated possibilities of disruption. They either nipped problems in the bud or made it clear what was expected.

## *REACTING TO EVENTS*

Other kinds of actions are triggered by a sign that all is not well. These signs might be pupils talking out of turn or pupils not getting on with set tasks. These responding kind of actions are reactions. The teachers respond to a cue that trouble might be brewing. Reactions included:

- warnings
- verbal rebukes
- standing beside a pupil
- using humour to defuse a situation
- explaining/helping
- moving a pupil
- sending a pupil to a higher authority
- involving parents.

The particular actions and reactions used varied. Much depended on individual circumstances. What was interesting was that teachers reported more actions concerning advance planning and preparation than reactions. When reporting reactions to possible trouble, explaining and helping featured prominently. Of

course, teachers also used warnings, shouted and other strategies. But it is worth emphasising the dividends paid by advance planning.

## *QUALITY PLANNING*

One of the most important steps to take towards more effective discipline is to prepare things in advance. Experienced teachers have a repertoire of lesson plans in their heads which they have built up over the years. New teachers do not. This is why their planning has to be more explicit and painstaking than that of their experienced colleagues. However, the quality of planning is vital. How do teachers know their plans are going to work? This is where the following are important:

- **knowing the pupils;** what will interest and motivate them
- **clear command of the subject matter;** knowing what is to be taught
- **access to resources;** so that variety of approaches are encouraged
- **familiarity with resources;** knowing that they are relevant to the task in hand.

Pupils in the schools in the research were well aware of their teachers' skills and could appreciate the level of planning that goes into lessons. The following extract is from a first year pupil describing what a real teacher does to get the class to work well:

> *"He always has the class working well and always has us all quiet during his class. He is always willing to help when you are stuck on a question. Some questions can be very difficult but he makes it look so simple when he shows the correct way it is to be done and often it's a lot simpler than I expected. He also likes a laugh but will not take any cheek from a pupil and soon the pupil will get to know this."*

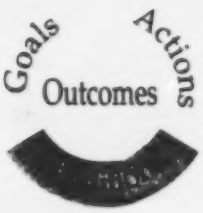
Advance planning is not just a matter of having the right materials to hand. For example, one teacher noted:

> *"I gave them a chance to ask me if they had any difficulties before they settled down to silent work."*

Analysing the quality of planning, relating it to the classroom conditions and goals is important. Keep your answers to the questions below and use them as a starting point for analysing your planning. *Scenarios 1–5* are starting points too.

## *ANALYSING YOUR OWN PRACTICE*

- ☐ Identify a class which you like teaching and in which you experience few problems. Think about your last lesson with that class. Jot down what you did to get the class to work well.
- ☐ How many things would you categorise as advance planning?
- ☐ How many things would you categorise as reacting to events?
- ☐ Why were your actions effective with this class? Think about your knowledge of the pupils, and the composition of the class. How did you take these into account when you planned the lesson?

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## WEIGHING UP THE CONTEXT

The context in which teachers teach greatly affects their actions and the outcomes of actions taken to promote or maintain effective discipline. What works for you today with one class may not work tomorrow. Common sense suggests that you do not lose your skills overnight but often you will find yourself blaming your lack of preparation or your level of enthusiasm. Equally you may blame the pupils — 'that lazy bunch of trouble makers'. You blame the conditions, the context.

Conditions in the classroom affect discipline. But when you become aware of the influence of conditions, which conditions do you try to change? Which conditions *can* you change? Friday afternoon will always be Friday afternoon and first year will always be first year for the whole school year.

Searching for conditions to change is pointless. There may be no 'right' conditions to alter in order to improve discipline. Indeed you are likely to find conditions which you cannot change and this may stop you trying to do anything. The important thing is to be aware of the conditions which you regularly take account of and allow for when teaching. Effective discipline will depend on your weighing up of these conditions and how you take them into account when you select your actions.

Here are some conditions which teachers said had a significant effect on teaching and discipline. The conditions were:

- Knowledge of the class
- Knowledge of an individual pupil
- Previous warnings to pupils
- General working conditions; such as the room, equipment, other resources
- Beliefs about teaching or about children: such as, it is wrong to be sarcastic
- Class size
- The nature of the subject
- Time; for example Friday afternoon, Monday morning
- The teacher's feelings; such as being in a good mood, feeling tired
- School or Government policy
- Teachers' own past experience.

Some of these conditions will be more important for you than others, but for every teacher there is one vital condition, the pupils themselves.

### *THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE PUPILS*

When weighing up the conditions affecting discipline, most teachers acknowledge the importance of one particular condition. That is, their knowledge of pupils or indeed the lack of it . Knowledge of your pupils may consist of knowledge of their

negative qualities, for example, their potential for disruption. It could also be about their potential as achievers and the positive personal qualities they exhibit. In our discussions with teachers many referred to this knowledge of pupils and of the class as having a strong influence on their actions to promote effective discipline:

> *"I never cease to be amazed by the differences between classes. I have two first year classes. One lot try to get away with doing as little as they can. They've never really taken to secondary school and there are one or two potential troublemakers in the class. I have to keep them all very busy, never let up or I lose them. The other class have really come together well, and they are very keen. I can give them a lot more freedom to discuss things, for example, without having a lot of silliness to squash first."*

Knowing how the pupils were likely to behave affected this teacher's actions. She knew she had to keep one class busy and have plenty of work for them or she would 'lose them'. With the second class she could give them more freedom and more responsibility.

How do teachers build up knowledge about pupils? Partly this is a question of watching, listening and talking to pupils but most schools have a dominant view of their pupils. The booklet on whole school policy — *Action on Discipline: Throughout the Secondary School* — has more details. New staff can pick this view up in various ways. Staffroom conversation is one important way. Of course, the class teacher may agree or disagree with the dominant view of pupils in the school, but the existence of such a view is an important condition affecting everyday teaching:

> *"In this school it's very much them and us. It's the history of the school, it was highly academic and selective. The kids from the housing schemes resent the middle-class academic kids and of course they see these kids as yobs and a lot of the older staff agree. But with my subject it's great, I get some really powerful work, especially from the boys — once I get them to understand that it's not just pretty drawings, it's real work."*

This art teacher was aware of a dominant view in his school, that pupils were expected to be 'academic'. In his classroom he used his awareness of the school view and his knowledge of the pupils to encourage 'real work'.

At parents' evenings do you make the most of opportunities to find out more about pupils' home life, their feelings about your lessons and family attitudes to school? Where does most of your information about pupils come from? How accurate and reliable is it? Do you know?

## *INCREASING YOUR AWARENESS OF THE CONDITIONS*

The most important condition affecting teachers' actions in the classroom is the knowledge they have about their pupils. Acquiring this knowledge and responding to it gives confidence to your actions.

Knowing about the different conditions which influence your actions, and responding to them, is more productive than searching for the 'perfect' conditions in which to promote effective discipline.

## CONDITIONS AND THEIR INFLUENCE

1 Think about the class you like teaching which you have already described. What are, for you, the most important influences on your planning for this class. For example:

- ☐ the subject— you feel confident, know what the salient issues are
- ☐ the pupils — you know their interests, abilities, aptitudes
- ☐ the time of day — you teach them before they or you get frazzled
- ☐ the availability of a good range of materials
- ☐ your mood — you feel relaxed, at ease, knowing you will enjoy the class and convey this expectation to them
- ☐ other things?.....

2 Now think about a class you find troublesome. Use the same checklist of influences. Where are the major differences? Do these provide starting points for change?

| | *Yes* | *No* |
|---|---|---|
| Confidence in the subject | ☐ | ☐ |
| Knowledge of the pupils | ☐ | ☐ |
| A good time of day | ☐ | ☐ |
| Availability of good materials | ☐ | ☐ |
| Your mood is positive | ☐ | ☐ |
| Other things? ..... | ☐ | ☐ |

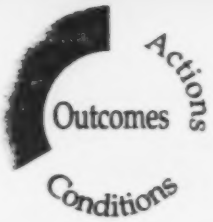
Are there any differences in the conditions influencing the good class and the troublesome class? If your answer is NO then, maybe for you, the difference between good and troublesome classes lies in the goals you set. See the next section for ways of analysing this.

If your answer is YES, there are differences in conditions, then these differences could be your starting point for change.

Which conditions are different? Can you improve on conditions for the troublesome class by:

- getting to know their personal interests and good points
- planning a new routine of having alternative activities
- rearranging the physical layout of the room or the grouping of pupils
- other changes?

If you cannot change conditions, then maybe you should redefine your goals for this class; see Chapter 5.




# 5

# DECIDING ON GOALS

In the previous chapters we have talked about the ways in which your actions and the conditions in the classroom affect discipline. We have suggested that you need to recognise these conditions, face them and consider them. We believe that actions need to fit the conditions. But why choose a particular action? Actions aimed at promoting effective discipline have not only to match the conditions but they need to fit in with what you as a teacher are trying to do with a specific pupil or class. Your actions will be influenced not only by conditions but also by your teaching and discipline goals.

## *GOALS*

Teachers have goals for the whole class and goals for individual pupils. A goal for a class might be to complete a section of their workbook: a goal for a pupil might be to get him or her to answer a question asked in class. Teacher usually have more than one goal for each lesson.

Goals directly influence actions even though you might not be aware of them. For example, a teacher had a goal of encouraging all pupils to answer questions:

> *"I take daft answers as well as good answers because I don't like to discourage anyone from answering."*

She was careful not to 'put pupils down' if they gave wrong or silly answers.

Goals of praising and encouraging pupils, making them feel valued are important. We all like to feel appreciated. Goals here might include praising pupils for making an effort, showing an interest, following instructions.

Many experienced teachers do not have explicit goals written out in the form of a lesson plan. Their experience and familiarity with a syllabus often makes this unnecessary. Yet goals they have and these influence the way they act in classrooms.

The two teachers quoted here had goals which became explicit because they were asked why they acted in particular ways:

> *"I have to be confident of what I am doing. I have to be able to give confidence to the less able pupil who is afraid of being in the class or maybe floundering a bit. I also want to give confidence to those kids who want to work by showing those children who may think they can be disruptive that they can't get away with it. When I have achieved that goal I can get on with other things.*
>
> *Once you've got them straight on that you can begin to set yourself targets like praising their work, making sure they progress through the syllabus and enjoying the work. Even then you still have to keep them on track with the occasional telling off."*
>
> *"Well the first thing I do when we are having a test is to remind them that I won't have any talking and that I don't want interruptions when*

*I'm reading out the instructions. The second thing is to space the kids out with plenty of space between them. I even get a couple of kids to use my desk so that there is plenty of room. Then I get them quiet, get them working and they know that silence is the rule from then on. It sounds a bit mechanical but they know what I expect and they get used to it. It makes the test something different from normal class work."*

## ANALYSING YOUR GOALS

Look back to your actions in Chapter 3 with the class you enjoyed teaching. Jot down answers to the following questions:

- ☐ What would you say your main goals were for the class? For example — to get through a piece of work — to produce something — to encourage pupils to enjoy learning — to avoid disruption — to give pupils confidence in their abilities
- ☐ Can you identify certain actions as relevant for certain goals?
- ☐ Do you think your goals were appropriate and relevant given your knowledge of the pupils?

Now do the same exercise for a difficult class. Look at your answers and consider this next set of questions:

- ☐ Do actions and goals conflict?
- ☐ Are goals appropriate given your knowledge of the pupils?
- ☐ What should you change to improve matters, goals, actions or both?

## WHEN GOALS CONFLICT

Teachers' goals can sometimes be in conflict. The example below shows how one teacher's goals of being seen to be fair to the class were in conflict with his goal to encourage one particular pupil to attend regularly. It also shows how knowledge about pupils influences goals:

*"Bill is a rascal of first order. There is a lot of information about him. He's at it. So I gave him a punishment exercise for forgetting his book. James is low ability, a nice wee lad. We're lucky if we get him to school each day, so I'm bending the rules with him which is a bit unfair... I didn't give him a punishment exercise. With anyone else I would have, but I felt it's so good to have him here and he has genuinely forgotten."*

In this case, Bill and James had forgotten to bring their books. This was breaking a well established rule. The teacher's explanation of why he punished Bill and not James shows how his knowledge about them influenced his actions. It also shows how teachers' goals can be in conflict. The desire to encourage James assumes, for this teacher, a higher priority than the goal of being seen to be fair when handling breaches of rules.

This is not to suggest that the teacher's action was either right or wrong. Rather, this small example of everyday classroom reality shows how many influences there are on classroom practice. Heightening awareness of these is a first step towards change and improvement. The interplay of **goals**, **conditions** and **actions** can be complex. The final sections of this booklet try to sum up how teachers can use the ideas presented here.

*Scenarios 1–5* also give examples of the interplay of goals, conditions and actions. These can be used to stimulate discussion about classroom practice in a non-threatening way.

## 6

# EFFECTIVE LEARNING FROM YOUR ACTIONS

When we act to maintain or promote effective discipline it is the start of a process. The process starts with making decisions about the 'best' thing to do in the circumstances and then choosing an appropriate action from our repertoire. Decisions about how to respond on a matter of discipline are taken tentatively. Not that we act in a tentative way when implementing decisions but in the sense that we remain open to whether our actions have had the desired effect.

If we are going to learn from our actions on discipline, we have to review the outcomes of those actions and be prepared to learn from our 'mistakes' and successes.

When you act, proactively or reactively, to promote effective discipline, there will be intended and expected outcomes from your action. You raise your voice — the class quietens. Equally there will be unexpected and unintended outcomes. You shout at the class — they shout back. Unexpected outcomes should not always be written off as actions which fail, they are the basis for taking new actions. Similarly, you can expect a class to be difficult and it turns out to be good. Everyone recognises the buzz from a really good lesson but few people analyse why things go well.

## *UNDERSTANDING EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE*

Understanding what helps to make classroom discipline effective begins by becoming more aware of your actions in the classroom and how they interact with the general context in which you work. This booklet offers you a framework which will help you develop this awareness. Its aim is to help you understand the complex realities of classroom life by offering a way of looking afresh at what happens. Three key elements have been highlighted:

- teachers' actions — distinguishing between proactive and reactive
- the classroom context — stressing the importance of teachers' knowledge about their pupils
- teachers' goals — suggesting that goals need to be appropriate.

The interplay of goals, conditions and actions is complex and this complexity often hinders awareness of how they influence events. *Scenarios 1–3* aim to show the importance of each of these elements and *Scenario 5* gives one example of a way in which they affect each other. *Scenario 4* shows how outcomes from an incident can be a useful focal point for analysing practice. Using the Scenarios, therefore, is one way of raising awareness about actions, goals, conditions and outcomes and their influence on each other. However, the scenarios focus on other people. Analysing your own practice is never easy and yet this needs to be done if you are to heighten awareness of your own skills and knowledge. This booklet has suggested various activities for analysing your own practice, contrasting good and troublesome pupils. If this proves impossible, are there other ways?

## *OTHER POSSIBILITIES*

There are many other ways of analysing classrooms. The approach suggested here is based on the need to understand the elements of actions, goals, and conditions in whichever methods you use. You might for example:

- ☐ ***Review the outcomes of your actions in the classroom***

  This is an important way to learn from your actions. Unintended and unexpected outcomes are particularly helpful in thinking about adapting existing approaches to discipline and developing new strategies. In this context, unintended and unexpected outcomes are not 'failures' and unexpected successes are important too.

- ☐ ***Ask for feedback from colleagues***

  Asking a friend/colleague to observe you in action is never easy. Try getting your colleague to frame the feedback in terms of actions, outcomes, conditions and goals. This helps you set out what you are trying to do and allows your colleague to give more structured feedback. You could do the same — observe your colleague in action. Working with a trusted and respected colleague in this way pays dividends for both parties.

- ☐ ***Tape-record one lesson***

  Listen to your tone of voice, the amount of time you spend talking, pupil reactions and so on. This will help give you critical distance on your actions to review them alongside your goals and the classroom context.

## *IN CONCLUSION*

This booklet concerns what you can do to help build effective discipline in your classroom. The approach is based on the belief that teachers can improve discipline in their own classrooms through their own actions. The only limitations are that you have to want to do it; that you are aware of the practical steps that you can take to make your actions effective; and that you have realistic expectations of what can be achieved.

What this booklet offers are ways of assessing how you might blend your own ingredients — your skills and experience, your pupils and your school — into your own recipe for effective discipline. Analysing your actions, goals, conditions and outcomes for at least one class will help you do just that. The text has offered ideas to help with your analysis. These ideas are drawn together on the analysis sheet on the next page. Using this will help you to understand the outcomes of your actions and to learn from what you already do well.

7

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The main text gave ideas for dealing with: actions (on page 5); conditions (on page 8); and goals (on page 10). The outcomes of your actions are affected by conditions and by goals. To improve these outcomes you have to look at all three elements together. The connections between actions, conditions and goals determine effective discipline outcomes.

This page suggests a basic exercise to carry out as often as you can, in order to strengthen your awareness and your skills. Think about a class that you enjoy teaching and which works well. Think back to your most recent lesson with that class.

Actions
What did you do?
before the lesson
during the lesson
Any action to change conditions?
Any action which changed goals?
Any condition which suggested an action?
Any goal which suggested an action?
Conditions
What was the context?
Goals
What were your aims or hopes?
Any condition which altered your goals?
Any goal which made you alter the conditions?

Was the overall outcome of that particular lesson successful? If yes:

- — did one of the three elements contribute most to that success?
- — did the success arise out of changes you made to any of the three or to lack of change?
- — can you identify positive connections applicable to other groups of pupils?

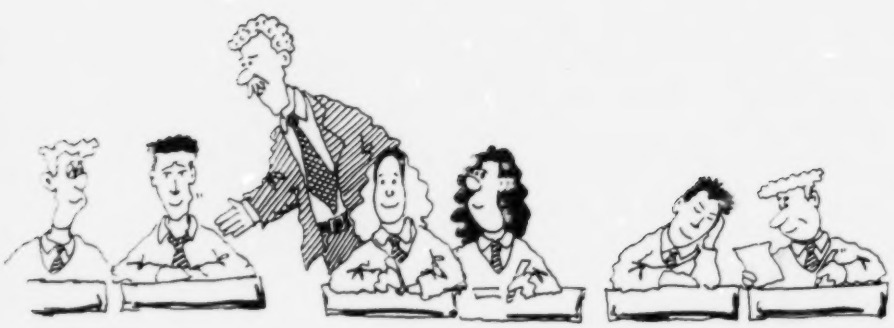
If not:

- — did one of the three elements undermine possible success?
- — did the outcome arise out of changes you made to any of the three – or to lack of change?
- — can you identify negative connections, and would it be possible to change any of the elements to make outcomes more positive?

Do you feel confident enough to discuss your reflections with a friendly colleague who will try the exercise too? Talking together will help.

*'Mr Smith tries his hardest to make a piece of work interesting to you. He treats each person as an individual.'*

*'She creates a friendly atmosphere and is easy to talk to. If someone really misbehaves she does not stand for it.'*



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22

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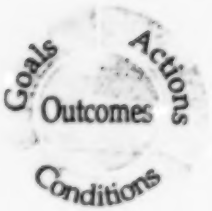
# ACTION ON DISCIPLINE

## SCENARIOS

*in the Secondary Classroom*




### USING THE SCENARIOS

This part of the support pack consists of five classroom scenarios. Each scenario illustrates some discipline issue(s), together with questions which ask you to evaluate the events described and comment on what you might do in a similar situation.

There are no right answers to the scenarios— different individuals and groups will find their own answers or alternative ideas. Scenarios can be used with the resource booklet *Action on Discipline: In the Secondary Classroom.*

Each scenario gives you the opportunity to:

- analyse and review a situation involving discipline and classroom management
- evaluate your own ideas about effective discipline in classroom situations
- become familiar with the discipline ideas offered in the classroom booklet.

You can develop the scenarios by:

- changing the characters involved, both pupils and teachers
- changing the situations to focus on what is most relevant to you
- changing the questions to direct attention to what you see as important issues.

Extending and changing the scenarios can be a good way of stimulating group discussion.

You can extend the ideas by:

- using them to start a discussion with colleagues who are more (or less) experienced
- using them to discuss common (or different) approaches with colleagues teaching in different styles
- using them to help students or beginning teachers to explore their ideas.

The scenarios are most effective when used in discussion groups. Groups of between three and six are ideal for promoting debate.

# ARTISTRY IN ACTION

As usual 3S storm up the central stairs to the art room. Bags and assorted clothing are draped over pegs outside the room. They wander into class and make their way to their places, collecting materials and paper left on the central table as they go. As pupils complete the task of getting their drawing boards arranged, Mrs Walker the art teacher enters the room from the adjacent preparation area flourishing a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other.

### *The lesson gets under way*

*Mrs Walker:* OK! Everyone ready? We all know what we are doing today. I'll start with a recap on still-life drawing then you can get started. Who would like to arrange this sword and pistol with the other items?

She senses the class are keen to start work and keeps her introduction short.

*Andy:* Miss, I haven't got a pencil. Can I borrow one?

Members of the class turn to face Andy and let out a communal sigh. Mrs Walker sits down beside a pupil and they begin to chat. Andy in a rather sheepish way makes his way to a large tin of pencils on the front desk and takes one.

The atmosphere in class is busy yet relaxed. Periodically, pupils leave their seats to collect materials. The room is quite noisy with low level conversations between pupils. Mrs Walker moves from pupil to pupil discussing their work. She takes her stool with her and sits beside each pupil in turn.

### *Twenty minutes later*

*Lisa:* Miss, I've finished.

*Mrs Walker:* OK! Lisa. I'll have a look in a moment.

*Lisa:* Can I go to the toilet, Miss?

Mrs Walker leaves the pupil she is with and walks over to Lisa.

*Mrs Walker:* That is really good, Lisa. Did you do some of this in the last lesson?

*Lisa:* Yes.

*Mrs Walker:* Very good. What you could do now, if you like, is start on that design for the disco poster. You're doing the light show as well aren't you? OK?

*Lisa:* Yes.

### *Changing the activity*

Lisa turns to her drawing board. Mrs Walker returns to her stool and her conversation with one of the girls.

*Mrs Walker:* Right, boys and girls, that's the bell for the end of the first period. Everyone is almost finished, so let's spend another ten minutes on this — then we will look at this video. If you finish before that you can read these notes on the video while you are waiting for the rest of us. If you have to go to the toilet, Lisa, go now.

*Lisa:* It's all right, Miss.

## DISCUSSION POINTS

1 As a method of avoiding disruption, Mrs Walker has established routines for her pupils. For example, collecting resources and paper from a table in the middle of the room when they arrive. What other proactive approaches does she use?

2 What are the pros and cons of the way Mrs Walker dealt with Andy?

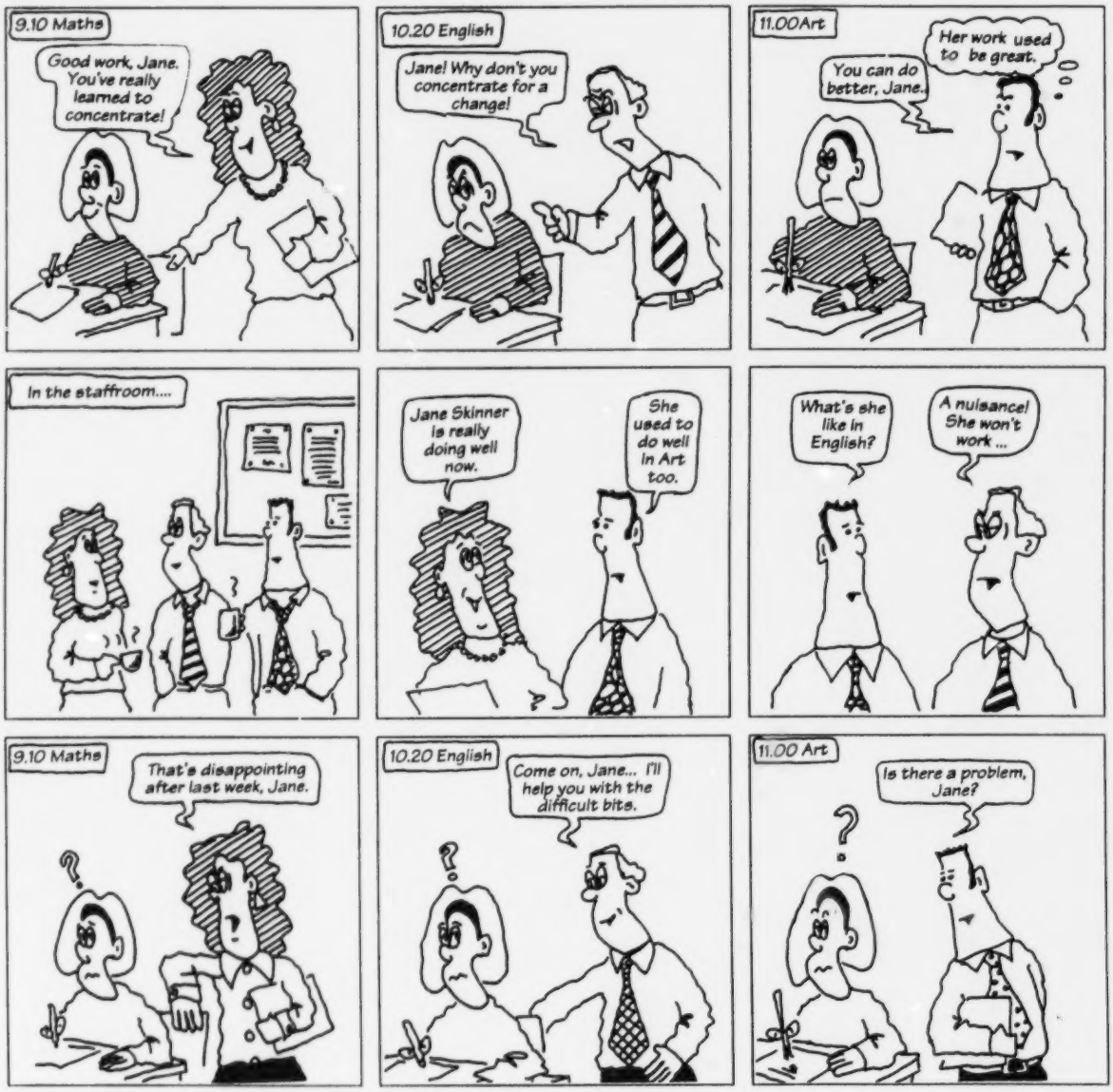
3 One of Mrs Walker's rules is that you go to the toilet at break. Why do you think she chose to react by *not* making this rule explicit with Lisa?

4 Which of Mrs Walker's management strategies do you think contribute most to her reputation amongst pupils as being 'a very good teacher who gets us to work'?

5 Do your pupils recognise and understand the patterns of behaviour you expect in your classroom? Do you make these expectations explicit?

6 Do you know *exactly* what you are going to do in a lesson before that lesson begins? Do your pupils?

# TO KNOW YOU IS TO...


9.10 Maths
Good work, Jane. You've really learned to concentrate!
10.20 English
Jane! Why don't you concentrate for a change!
11.00 Art
You can do better, Jane.
Her work used to be great.
In the staffroom....
Jane Skinner is really doing well now.
She used to do well in Art too.
What's she like in English?
A nuisance! She won't work ...
9.10 Maths
That's disappointing after last week, Jane.
10.20 English
Come on, Jane... I'll help you with the difficult bits.
11.00 Art
Is there a problem, Jane?

## DISCUSSION POINTS

1 How did the teachers build up their knowledge of Jane?

2 Are there conditions other than knowledge of Jane's abilities and behaviour which affect the teachers?

3 How do you build up knowledge of your pupils — and what kind of knowledge do you collect?

4 What opportunities exist in your school for sharing information about pupils? Could they be improved? What ethical issues arise?

# KEEPING GOALS IN SIGHT

Mr Knight leaves the staffroom as soon as the bell rings for the beginning of afternoon school. Usually, he is in no hurry as his classes take at least five minutes to reach the history department. But as it is the top examination group, the first of his career, arriving early helps him get his thoughts together and settles the nerves. On arrival he checks the work he has prepared for the class and puts handouts on desks ready for their arrival. The desks and chairs are set out in rows. This is unusual.

### *The class arrives*

A few moments later the class of six boys and eight girls arrive.

*Tony:* Afternoon, David.

*Mr Knight:* I'm Mr Knight to you, Tony.

*Tony:* OK, but at the beginning of term you said we could call you David.

### *Desks are rearranged*

Tony takes a handout from a desk and joins his classmates who are busy reorganising furniture and collecting handouts from desks. The noise rises as the class carry on rearranging the desks into their usual groups.

*Mr Knight:* Right, you can just get up and put the handouts back on the desks where you found them and rearrange this room as it was when you arrived. Do that right away.

Reluctantly the class reorganise the room.

*Mr Knight:* Yusuf, move that desk away from Anne's. That's not where you found it.

*Yusuf:* But Mr Anson lets us sit where we like.

*Mr Knight:* I'm not Mr Anson. Now please let's get on. Pick up the handout and have a read about today's work. It's three weeks into the new school year and you should know what I expect of this class. Surely you don't need to be told how to come into class and get on with the work.

### *Work begins*

The class settle down to work. Mr Knight sits at his desk reviewing some homework. He becomes aware of increased noise and movement in the class.

*Mr Knight:* This is an independent exercise, fifth year, I'm not interested in what your friend knows. I'm interested in what you know!

### *At the end of the lesson*

*Mr Knight:* Right, we have five minutes left. Listen carefully. At the beginning of term I told you that this work was different and that I expected you to adopt a mature approach to your studies. This lesson has shown me that you still think I'm here to force you to work and to pass your exam for you. You're not in first year now ...

## DISCUSSION POINTS

1 Mr Knight felt that his main teaching goal in the lesson was to get the class to work well and independently. How successful was he? What pupil activities indicated his success or failure in achieving this goal?

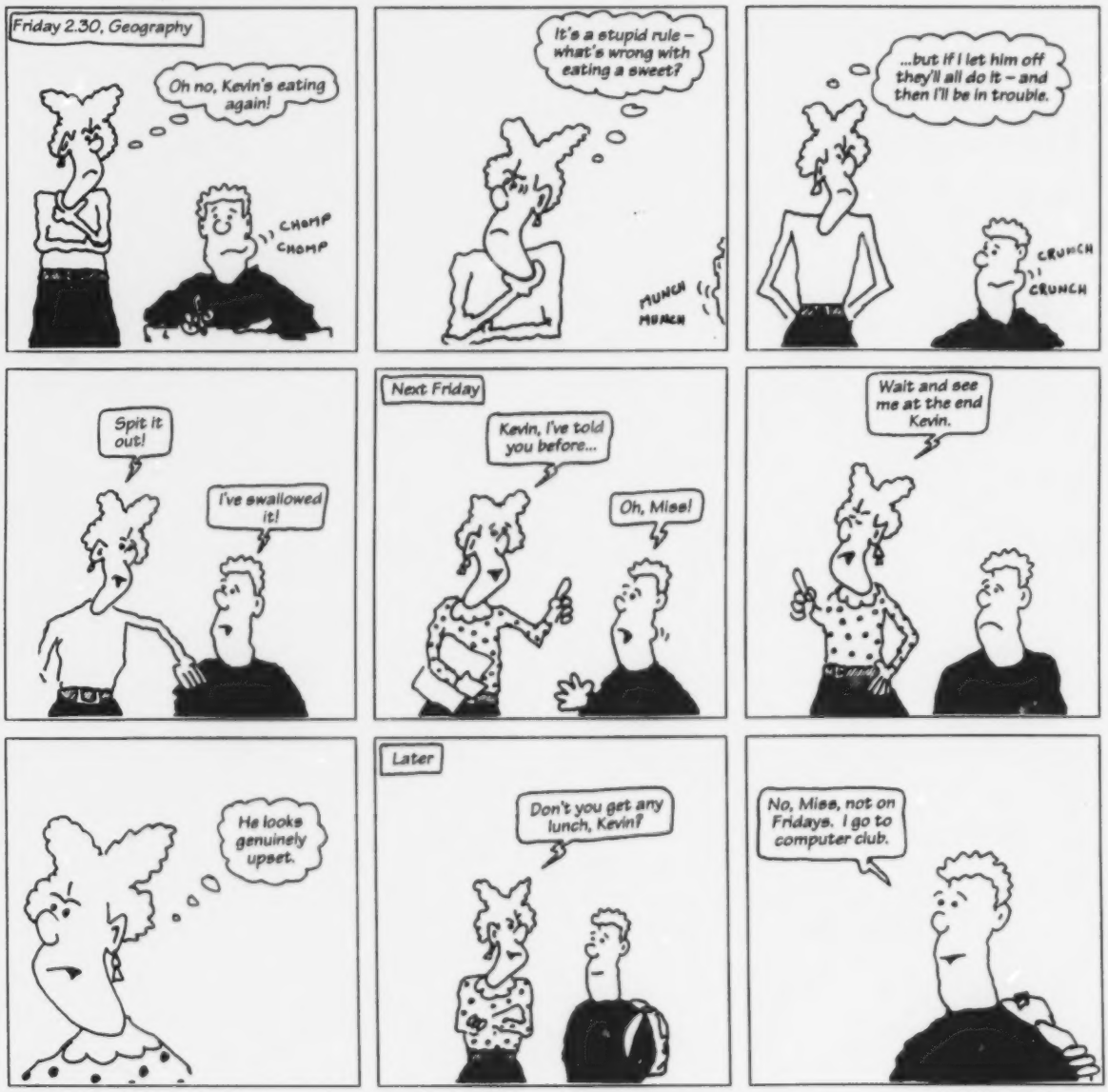
2 Which of Mr Knight's actions are the most effective in getting over what he sees as acceptable and normal behaviour for pupils?

3 In Mr Anson's class some pupils are overheard grumbling about Mr Knight's lessons – 'I don't know what he expects – you never know where you are with him.' What should Mr Anson, the head of history, do?

4 How do you ensure that pupils know what your goals are for their behaviour? Do they know when (and why) your goals change?

5 In your department do colleagues share a common set of expectations about how pupils should behave in the classroom? To what extent are you free to set your own expectations of how your pupils should behave in your lessons?

## FOCUS ON OUTCOMES


Friday 2.30, Geography
Oh no, Kevin's eating again!
CHOMP CHOMP
It's a stupid rule – what's wrong with eating a sweet?
MUNCH MUNCH
...but if I let him off they'll all do it – and then I'll be in trouble.
CRUNCH CRUNCH
Spit it out!
I've swallowed it!
Next Friday
Kevin, I've told you before...
Oh, Miss!
Wait and see me at the end Kevin.
He looks genuinely upset.
Later
Don't you get any lunch, Kevin?
No, Miss, not on Fridays. I go to computer club.

## DISCUSSION POINTS

1 In the first part of this scenario Kevin's teacher weighs up the pros and cons of different courses of action. Is she uncertain about the possible outcomes? Why might this be?

2 Kevin's teacher is concerned about what other teachers — or her department head — or the headteacher — might think. Are common standards important in your school? Why/why not?

3 Would you say that the outcome was successful on either occasion? Why/why not?

4 In an ideal world, knowledge of Kevin's eating habits on a Friday might have changed the strategy used by his teacher. What is it about classroom situations that encourages action before knowledge? Is this inevitable and/or desirable?

5 How would you have reacted on each occasion and why?

# IT'S NOT FAIR, SIR!

A long list of announcements at morning assembly delays the start of the first lesson of Monday morning. Class 2T wander in ten minutes late for their double lesson of Chemistry. They show little enthusiasm for starting work. The noise level is high.

*Mr Rosso:* Right, 2T, you're late. I want you to settle down and get your lab books out. Would you all stop talking, please! John, sit down.

### *The class quietens*

Very few pupils make a move to get out their books. The teacher stands by the door for several minutes looking at the class. Slowly the class quietens.

*Mr Rosso:* Right (voice raised), you lot, listen to me... you're late into my class and you have the cheek to waste my time by not getting your books out. You will all stay in for an extra five minutes after the bell. If you waste my time then I will waste yours.

*Warren:* Boo..Boo (class join in).

*John:* That's not fair, Sir!

*Mr Rosso:* Right, Warren and John, *you* can stay in for the whole break.

The class break into loud laughter. Warren and John make a show of being hurt and angered but say nothing else. They are well known as the class 'moaners' who complain about almost all teacher actions, particularly punishments and homework.

### *Work begins*

The class settle down to prepare for an experiment. The teacher moves about hurriedly preparing equipment and setting up work areas on the side benches. Requests to the teacher to clarify written instructions are met with the reply 'ask your neighbour'. On three occasions the teacher has to leave the lab to collect chemicals from the store room. On each occasion the noise level on his return is very high and it takes several minutes to get the class to settle down. Pupils begin to complete their writing tasks and are directed by their teacher to the experiments now set up on the side benches.

*Sarah:* What do we do with this, Sir? (gesturing to the equipment).

*Mr Rosso:* We talked about it last lesson and you've just written out what to do. Please get on with it.

*Sarah:* We only have three test tubes, Sir.

The practical part of the lesson is chaotic. The teacher spends most of the time checking equipment and handing out chemicals. At the same time, he has to pay attention to getting the class to work safely with the glassware.

### *The bell goes*

Half of the equipment has not been washed up or put away, but the class start to go.

*Mr Rosso:* John and Warren, where are you going?

*John:* The bell, rang Sir. It's break.

*Mr Rosso:* I told you that you were both staying in over break.

*Warren:* That's not fair, Sir.

*Mr Rosso:* I told you before, if you waste my time I'm going to waste yours.

*Warren:* I didn't do anything.

*John:* You said the class had to stay in and you've just let them out. It's not fair. We didn't do anything.

*Mr Rosso:* Go and sit down over there or you can help me tidy up in here.

*Warren:* I'm not staying (moves towards the door).

*Mr Rosso:* Where do you think you're going (shouting)?

*Warren:* I'm going to see Mrs Davis (guidance teacher).

*Mr Rosso:* Right, you go then and I will see her myself. Right, John, off you go too.

Warren does not go to see Mrs Davis but makes his way with John into the playground. A small group of other pupils join them to hear the boys relate their story.

## DISCUSSION POINTS

1 The teacher had a number of goals, such as getting the class to settle quickly and complete the planned experiment in what was left of the double period. What do you think his other goals were? Which was the most important, do you think?

2 What about conditions? Was there anything Mr Rosso could have done to alter the conditions surrounding his lesson?

3 Mr Rosso had his lesson planned in advance but the outcome made him angry. Where did he go wrong? *Did* he go wrong? How much of his planned lesson could he afford to abandon — and why?

4 Think about the interaction of goals, actions, conditions and outcomes in your classroom situations:

— How do you deal with goal conflict — are some goals more important than others?

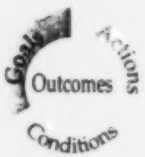
— Everybody acts before they think at times — are your actions routine? Is this good or bad?

— How do you think about conditions? Are you taking conditions for granted — and is this good or bad?

— Are outcomes in your classes more or less as you want them? Why is this – can you list the reasons?

— If you wanted to change your classroom practice, where would you start? Actions? Goals? Conditions?

## MAKING LINKS

| Scenarios | | Action on Discipline: In the Secondary Classroom |
|---|---|---|
| *Scenario 1* | | ***Chapter 3***<br>Planning learning activities carefully<br>Making connections with previous work<br>Developing class routines<br>Positive relationships with pupils<br>Knowledge of pupils |
| *Scenario 2* | | ***Chapter 4***<br>Knowledge of pupils and the class<br>Time of the week/day<br>Class size<br>Beliefs about children and pupils |
| *Scenario 3* |   | ***Chapter 5***<br>Identifying teaching and behavioural goals<br>Selecting appropriate goals for different pupils<br>Balancing conflicting goals |
| *Scenario 4* | | ***Chapter 6***<br>Learning from unexpected outcomes<br>Monitoring outcomes<br>Getting feedback on your teaching<br>Relating outcomes to actions, conditions and goals |
| *Scenario 5* | | ***Chapters 6 and 7***<br>Interrelating actions, conditions, goals and outcomes |

# ACTION ON DISCIPLINE

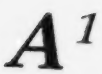
## *Throughout the Secondary School*

*Pamela Munn*
*Margaret Johnstone*
*Gordon Watson*
*Lynne Edwards*

## HOW TO USE THE DISCIPLINE PACK

This booklet is part of a pack which aims to support schools' work in the important area of discipline. The pack contains two booklets. One (this booklet) concentrates on whole school discipline. The other (*Action on Discipline: In the Secondary Classroom*) focuses on discipline in the classroom. These booklets draw on key findings from SCRE research on discipline — research on the day-to-day realities of school life, to help schools improve discipline. The focus is on understanding what makes for effective discipline.

There are three symbols used to identify the three different kinds of support material for the booklets.



**Action on Policy Papers:** There are five of these. They suggest practical tasks which can help improve discipline. They emphasise the need to go beyond paper policy to active commitment and implementation of agreed changes in discipline practice.
They can be used to:

- help the school analyse its current discipline message
- involve the whole school community in improving discipline.

**Information Sheets:** There are three of these at the back of this booklet. They list some discipline resource packs for schools and offer a brief description of them. They also list some major books and articles on discipline.

**Scenarios:** There are five of these. They present descriptions of every-day classroom events. They are intended as a stimulus for discussion about teachers' classroom practice and about whole school discipline. No right answers are given. Teachers can use these scenarios to:

- consider their own ideas about what makes for effective discipline
- analyse the connections between discipline in their classrooms, subject departments and the school as a whole.

# ACTION ON DISCIPLINE

## *Throughout the Secondary School*

*Pamela Munn*
*Margaret Johnstone*
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*Lynne Edwards*

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37

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# CONTENTS


*page*

**The Research** ..... ii
**Acknowledgements** ..... ii

**1 Getting Started** ..... 1

**2 Why be Concerned About Discipline?** ..... 3
School effectiveness ..... 3
Means and ends ..... 3
Pupils and rules ..... 4
The central role of the school ..... 4
Summary ..... 5

**3 Analysing the Discipline Message: Key Influences on Discipline** ..... 6
Expectations about pupils ..... 6
Senior management style ..... 7
Subject departments ..... 8
Guidance ..... 9
Expectations about parents ..... 10
Summary ..... 11

**4 Transmitting the Discipline Message** ..... 12
School rules ..... 12
Sanctions and rewards ..... 12
The school brochure ..... 14
Policy and practice ..... 14
Summary ..... 15

**5 Changing the Discipline Message** ..... 16
Making change happen ..... 16
Getting commitment ..... 16
Starting points for working with staff, pupils and parents ..... 17
To sum up ..... 17
Starting to analyse the discipline message ..... 18

**Publications** ..... 19

**Information Sheets**

## THE RESEARCH

The ideas and information in this support pack are based on the findings of research into discipline in Scottish schools carried out over a three-year period by the Scottish Council for Research in Education. The research reports are listed on page 19 of this booklet.

The examples and quotations used in the text are from real schools and teachers. Any names used are fictitious

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This pack would not have been possible without the help and support of a great many people. The teachers and pupils in schools who took part in SCRE research on discipline provided the foundation of the pack. It was refined and developed by the constructive criticism of members of an Advisory Committee and by teachers and parents who commented on the materials at a draft stage. The Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) commissioned the research and the development of the pack and we are grateful for its support.

Final responsibility for the content lies with the authors. The views represented here are not necessarily those of SCRE or of SOED.

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# 1

# GETTING STARTED

## *HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET*

This booklet focuses on discipline in the whole school. It uses findings from SCRE research to pin-point the key factors contributing to effective discipline. It concentrates on routine discipline and does not deal with extreme pupil misbehaviour or on pupils with records of need in terms of social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. A separate publication is necessary to tackle this adequately.

The booklet does not offer *the* correct recipe for effective discipline. If such a recipe existed it would have been discovered by now! It offers a means of looking at the school in the way an outsider would, to analyse the discipline message. Instead of taking things for granted about the way the school operates, it suggests you try to look at it as a stranger. This is intended as a way of identifying the key ingredients of good discipline which can then be assembled in the combination most appropriate to your school.

WHY bother? Taking a fresh look at the school can:

- help you understand what works and why it works
- help the school adapt to changing circumstances
- identify areas for improvement and development.

## *STRUCTURE*

The booklet is in five main chapters of which this is the first. Chapter 2 highlights the importance of discipline to overall school effectiveness and stresses that schools can make a difference to the way pupils behave. Chapter 3 identifies key elements in a school's ethos which contribute towards discipline policy — elements which the school may not be aware of in the hurly burly of everyday school life. Chapter 4 looks at ways of analysing the discipline message the school is giving out and identifying strengths and weaknesses. Chapter 5 outlines ways of changing the discipline message.

## *SHARING THE BOOKLET*

This booklet can be used with different groups for different purposes. For example:

- *the senior management team* to review discipline policy in general in the whole school
- *department heads* to consider the match and mismatch among departments in rules, sanctions and rewards
- *teaching staff* to review communication about pupil discipline and to share ideas
- *the guidance team* to analyse positives and negatives of the school policy in action
- *classroom teachers* to show connections between the school policy and classroom practice, by using it with the classroom booklet.

The booklet can be used on its own or with other support material in the pack to raise awareness about key influences on discipline and as a starting point for review and development. Each school will have its own starting point for such a review. Some will want to focus on rules, sanctions and rewards; others on home–school relationships; others again will prefer to flick through the booklet before identifying particular starting points. Whatever the starting point, our intention is that this booklet and the associated materials provide useful advice and support. The real work in improving discipline will be done by teachers, parents and pupils working together.

2

## WHY BE CONCERNED ABOUT DISCIPLINE?

Good discipline is a vital part of school life. It is one of the elements which make up a school's ethos — that intangible combination of factors which give each school its unique character and atmosphere.

SCRE research on discipline involved over 100 secondary schools, around 1000 teachers and almost all secondary school headteachers in Scotland. It found that:

- it was persistent low-level indiscipline such as pupils talking out of turn, avoiding work or just eating in class that wearied teachers
- violence against teachers was rare
- most discipline problems were caused by a minority of pupils, typically older, male pupils nearing the end of compulsory schooling
- there was a worrying lack of concern for others among pupils, reflecting perhaps changing values in society
- 36% of the teachers saw discipline as a serious problem
- but teachers in the same school disagreed about whether discipline was a serious problem.

Overall, the surveys gave a picture of many pupils as unwilling to learn and reluctant to be in school. Understandably, many teachers pointed to economic and social difficulties in local communities as having an impact on pupils' behaviour. Yet there are things that schools themselves can do to promote effective discipline. Chapter 3 describes these. However, why *should* schools give discipline priority over all the other demands on them? There are two main reasons, suggested by teachers themselves:

- good discipline helps overall school effectiveness
- good discipline is central to the organisation of school life.

### *SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS*

Research on school effectiveness has shown that schools make a difference. Schools with very similar pupils, located in very similar environments differ in their effects on pupils' levels of attainment as measured in public examination results. They also differ on a range of other measures. One explanation for differential effects lies in school ethos. Ethos is hard to define. It is made up of many different elements — staff and pupils' attitudes and expectations are key. There are other elements too and ethos indicators are now available for schools to use to evaluate their climate. Details are in *Information Sheet 3*. This booklet could be used in conjunction with these indicators to review school discipline, an element in school ethos.

### *MEANS AND ENDS*

Discipline is a means to an end. It is necessary if pupils are to learn. Effective discipline is not the same as effective learning. Without effective classroom

discipline, however, it is unlikely that pupils will learn much. Effective discipline, as in a well-ordered classroom, is a necessary, but not the only condition for effective learning.

Discipline is also a curricular end in itself, as in, say, learning respect for and toleration of others. It goes beyond what is needed for effective learning in the subject-based curriculum. Its concern is with socialisation and the development of values, beliefs and attitudes. This is an ambitious and difficult job for schools who, of course, cannot undertake it alone. What schools see as acceptable behaviour may not be shared by pupils, parents and some members of the local community. Conflicting views will be hard to reconcile, especially if pupils and parents see no good reason for the school's demands. Trying to reconcile these views might start with explanations from the school and with frank discussions with pupils and parents. For some schools, such a step may be daunting. For others, a start might be made on this demanding road.

## PUPILS AND RULES

Discipline is also necessary for pupils' safety and well-being. Schools have a duty of care to the pupils who attend. Rules are necessary so that health and safety risks are minimised. Most pupils will accept rules for which there is a clear rationale and which are seen to be fair. The SCRE research found that rules which seemed only to emphasise teachers' power and authority were resented. Rules about uniform and out of bounds areas tend to fall into these latter categories. As one pupil said:

> *"I don't like the rule that says we are not allowed to wear jeans. I don't know why we are not allowed to wear jeans. It's not as if its going to affect our performance in school."*

Very few pupils saw any element of personal benefit in keeping to rules, other than getting on with school work. This could be worrying. If pupils do not value school work then rules can seem pointless. How can schools get across the personal and social consequences of rule breaking and open up discussion about the need for rules?

## THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

There are many other influences on pupils' social development, for instance, parents, friends, community, and the media. Yet the school's role is an important one. It can open up a debate about values. It can systematically and overtly contribute to pupils' personal and social development. It can explicitly and implicitly convey its own value system. For example, one school in SCRE's research had set out to emphasise that the school and its local community could work together for the good of the children. Its brochure stated:

> *"The young people of the area are the responsibility of school, parents and community. School interest does not cease at 4.00 pm; the community interest should not cease at 9.00 am... It is only by working together, by appreciating each other's work and problems, that we can meet the aims of the school and make ours a happy, efficient community."*

These were not just ideas on paper. The school set out deliberately to involve parents and local community members in its activities. It was alert to the effects of the curriculum on pupils' motivation and worked with the community in experimenting with curriculum provision to meet the needs of pupils. It was also concerned that parents had a misleading notion of higher education as 'not for people like them'. It encouraged parents to have high aspirations for their children. As one teacher put it:

> *"We have to say to our kids and their parents that you do not have to be born within a certain social structure to go on to higher education."*

This school overtly took a role in pupils' lives and tried to use ideas of good discipline to contribute to a positive school ethos.

## *SUMMARY*

Some key points about the importance of discipline are:

- effective discipline can have a positive influence on teacher and pupil morale, making school an enjoyable and interesting place to be
- effective discipline contributes to school effectiveness in general
- effective discipline is an important pre-condition for pupils' levels of attainment
- effective discipline is part of the personal and social development of pupils
- effective discipline is necessary for pupils' safety and well-being.

If the school already has effective discipline, understanding why this is so will help ensure it stays that way. It will also help the school cope with changes such as new pupil intakes, new management systems or curriculum development.

If the school feels its discipline could be improved, this booklet offers a way of looking afresh at what is happening. Before change and improvement can take place, the school needs to understand the main influences on its current policy.

# 3

# ANALYSING THE DISCIPLINE MESSAGE: KEY INFLUENCES ON DISCIPLINE

Each school has it unique culture, history and environment. What is seen as effective discipline in one school may not be appropriate in another. In deciding what kind of effective discipline to aim for, schools have first to analyse their discipline message. What are the signals they are giving, intentionally and maybe unintentionally, to pupils and their parents? What kinds of discipline are staff promoting? Are all staff promoting the same general standards? This Chapter lists key influences on discipline. It also gives examples of messages about discipline being transmitted by the school.

SCRE's in-depth study of a small number of secondary schools showed that each school had its own idea of what effective discipline was. What the schools had in common were five key influences on effective discipline:

- expectations about the pupils
- senior management style
- the freedom of subject departments to make their own rules and regulations
- expectations about the role of guidance staff
- expectations about parental support and involvement.

These were fundamental to the way in which teachers applied rules, sanctions and rewards. They also affected how pupils responded.

## *EXPECTATIONS ABOUT PUPILS*

All teachers have expectations about the way pupils will behave and what they will achieve. Research has shown that these expectations have a strong influence on the way teachers act towards pupils. Pupils are also adept at picking up teachers' expectations about them. These expectations influence how pupils respond to teachers. A key ingredient of good discipline is positive pupil–teacher relationships.

Two teachers sum up the expectations most staff in their school have of the pupils, that is that they are basically good kids but lacking in self-esteem:

> *"We try to run a caring, sharing school. It's a cliché, but we try hard to make it real. There are a lot of good kids here but they lack any self-esteem. They don't know what they're capable of or are frightened to try in case they fail. Of course we also have kids with a lot of problems. The guidance staff are central to our good discipline, it's the way they look after all the pupils, not just the ones with problems. But most of the staff here agree that with our children we have to be caring and sharing to get anywhere."*

> *"Pupils here have a very low self-esteem, they don't see any future for themselves. We can achieve a reasonable standard of behaviour by*

*getting the kids to understand why rules are needed but we have to get beyond that to let these kids see that we value them and that they can achieve something. I believe that schools can make a difference. It means a lot of work for the staff and for the management team, but most of us believe in what we are doing."*

In this school, expectations about pupils influenced whole school policy in the following ways:

- rules were expressed positively, as in *Be polite*, rather than negatively, as in *Do not run in corridors*, thereby conveying an expectation that pupils would behave well;
- the rationale for rules was spelt out. It was not taken for granted that pupils would understand why rules were needed;
- guidance staff were involved with all pupils not just those with problems. This signalled that everyone in the school was working together to promote good discipline;
- when rules were broken it was made clear to pupils that it was their *behaviour* that was being rejected but that they were still valued as people.

Both the teachers above mentioned that *most* staff believed in what they were doing. There is a dominant view of pupils in all schools. Not all staff share it, however. It is often staff who disagree with the dominant view who are best able to describe the assumptions and expectations made about pupils. Another teacher at the same school was critical of the caring, sharing approach:

*"Mr McLellan [the headmaster] is always on about 'a caring, sharing school' but these kids don't care about anybody. I try my best to make lessons interesting, and I have a super head of department who has really helped me and brought me on. She will always back me up and I'm not frightened to go to her for help. I'm managing okay, but it's not what I came into teaching for. I'm looking for a different school."*

The school's discipline message was acceptable and logical to the first two teachers. It influenced their classroom teaching. The message was unrealistic as far as the third teacher was concerned. Her view of teaching was that it mainly concerned transmission of knowledge and the academic development of pupils. Her view of pupils as not caring about anybody gives her permission not to change her teaching, 'It's not what I came into teaching for'. Tied up in expectations of pupils are beliefs about the nature and purpose of teaching. Teachers will differ on how much teaching concerns pupils' social and personal development as well as their academic development. Perhaps it is in the interest of this teacher and the school that she finds a different school. On the other hand, involving her in developing the school's discipline policy might encourage her to reconsider her view of pupils. It might also sharpen up the policy by having a critic on the team. *Action on Policy 5* suggests some ideas on whom to involve in policy development.

## *SENIOR MANAGEMENT STYLE*

In the quotations about the dominant view of the pupil, two of the teachers also mentioned that the goal of being a caring, sharing school means a lot of work for

management. Senior staff sustain the school's discipline message by what they say and do. They can actively promote discipline by:

- being visible around the school at breaks, lunch times, lesson changes, and as pupils leave for the day; as one head teacher put it 'wearing out shoe leather'
- being accessible to staff at certain times to discuss discipline
- being seen to be interested in all staff and pupils. A pupil summed up the importance of this: 'Mr Smith is great. He treats you like a person. You wouldn't want to let him down'
- thanking staff for good work; giving praise to colleagues.

Each school senior management team will have its own ways of being visible, accessible and interested. A key point is the balance in management time and effort devoted to preventing discipline problems arising as opposed to dealing with incidents of indiscipline. For example, one headteacher in the SCRE research commented:

> *"I realised that the only time I wrote to parents about their children was to complain. A letter from me was always about problems, bad news. What kind of message were parents getting? It made me stop and think."*

This headteacher worked with staff and pupils to develop a newsletter which went to parents once a term giving information about the things the school was doing. These included school trips, work experience, progress in sports and music competitions and so on. He believed this helped the school as a whole to get a more rounded view of its achievements. It gave the head a better sense of perspective too. Dealing mostly with problems can mean that the good things about the school get taken for granted, and even neglected, by senior staff. *Action on Policy 3* outlines a practical activity for senior staff to analyse the messages about the discipline they are conveying.

Senior management teams work with heads of departments to establish a whole school policy on discipline. Heads of departments are a vital link in the discipline chain.

## SUBJECT DEPARTMENTS

Schools vary in the amount of freedom subject departments have to set their own standards of discipline. Some schools start from the belief that their caring, sharing approach demands the same approach and standards in all subject departments. Other schools believe that it is the job of the head of the department to set the rules and regulations appropriate to that department within the broad framework agreed by the school. Where this happens, heads of department may allow members of the department to do their own thing or may work with staff to set common standards. In the example below, rather different approaches are taken by the mathematics and English departments in one particular school:

> *"We all agree in our department, we work in the same way. We support each other and we know what we're doing. We have our*

*programme of work planned and we usually achieve it. The head of department is very organised and a tough character. There's very little we would take up to the headteacher from this department."*

*"In a way, we agree to disagree. For example, Louise next door, she seems to me to take risks I wouldn't – but it works for her. Our head of department doesn't insist on a sort of standard approach. We all recognise that getting the pupils to work is the most important thing. I think we get good results and we rarely have any problems that go beyond the department. Our department head is very supportive."*

Schools where subject departments had freedom to set their own standards usually justified it in terms of the professional expertise and autonomy of subject teachers. Allowing this freedom also emphasised that departments had clear responsibility for discipline. For them this recognition of professionalism outweighed the potential costs of pupils having to recognise and get used to different standards in different parts of the school.

In analysing the school's discipline message, consider the role of subject departments. What are the costs and benefits of departmental autonomy when it comes to discipline? *Action on Policy 4* provides a check-list of questions which heads of departments could consider in collaboration with each other.

## GUIDANCE

All schools have staff who have special responsibility for pupils' personal and social development and general welfare. The status, roles and responsibilities of these staff are an important source of information about the school's discipline message.

Do guidance staff have responsibility for teaching the curriculum in personal and social development? Are their energies devoted to dealing mainly with problem pupils? What is their role in relation to form teachers and subject specialists? To what extent are these staff seen as 'front-line' guidance?

There is no one best way for guidance staff or the pastoral care team to operate but how they operate sends signals about discipline. For example, one of the schools involved in the SCRE research did not see the need for personal and social education classes on the timetable. The dominant view of the pupils was that they were well-motivated and well-behaved. In these circumstances, personal and social education classes would take up valuable subject teaching time. The role of guidance staff was seen as helping all pupils make appropriate curriculum choices and helping specific pupils with problems. The discipline message being conveyed was an expectation that everyone shared common standards, that hard work was the prerequisite to academic achievement, and that the only pupils who were in regular contact with guidance staff were problem pupils, that is, disaffected members of the school community who rejected its values.

In contrast, another school had a range of fairly senior staff involved in guidance. All pupils attended personal and social education classes once a week where topics such as health, bullying, careers, and sex education featured. The curriculum materials for these lessons had been developed by the guidance staff after general

consultation with teaching staff about the main features of the curriculum. Almost all staff were involved in teaching some aspect of personal and social education. Guidance staff also had a major role in helping pupils with problems and in liaising with parents. The discipline message being conveyed was that the school was interested in pupils' social and academic development, that social norms and values could be debated and that guidance staff were interested in all pupils. Also, the senior management team was seen to consult and value guidance staff. Guidance staff consulted and liaised with teachers, and sought their views.

There is no one best way of organising guidance that will suit all schools. What is important is to be aware of the messages about discipline being transmitted by the roles and responsibilities of guidance staff.

## EXPECTATIONS ABOUT PARENTS

Parents now have new roles as customers and managers of schools. They can exercise influence through parental choice of school and through parental voice in school boards and governing bodies. The vast majority of parents are interested in their children's education. They want their children to do well. They want their children to have a happy and enjoyable time at school.

Parents and teachers are the key partners in children's education. To translate that rhetoric into reality, however, schools need to ask themselves some searching questions about their expectations of parental involvement. The fundamental question for schools is: *does our school really want to work with parents?* Consider the following account by a parent of his first real contact with his child's secondary school. The child was three months into the first year:

> *"I went up to see the headteacher because I thought Robert was standing still. He was not developing. He had been so excited and had looked forward to starting secondary school. I felt he was not being pushed hard enough. The head was pleasant enough but I was given the message that I was making a fuss about nothing. Robert gets very little homework. He's losing interest. Yet I'm told in so many words, you're over-reacting."*

All too often parents who challenge the school's way of doing things are typified as problems in much the same way as children are. If Robert's loss of interest leads to bad behaviour such as talking out of turn in class, work avoidance or escalates into truancy, will the school expect his parents to support the teachers?

Schools need to ask themselves what kinds of messages about parental involvement they are transmitting to those parents who do contact them. Chapter 4 gives more details.

What about the parents that schools seldom or never see? A familiar comment at parents' evenings is, 'You never see the parents you want to'. Teachers who make this kind of comment should ask themselves if they would turn up (perhaps re-arranging shifts) to stand in a queue and then be publicly humiliated about their children's lack of effort, interest or bad behaviour. This may be a parody of parents' evenings in your school. All too often, however, parents' evenings mean long

queues for three or four minutes conversation with a teacher. conversation which can be overheard by others.

Parents need to feel genuinely welcome. Their views and comments need to be valued, not dismissed out of hand. *Action on Policy 2* and *5* give ideas about how parents might become involved.

## SUMMARY

In this Chapter five key influences on a school's discipline message have been highlighted:

- expectations about pupils
- senior management style
- subject departments
- guidance
- expectations about parents.

They operate subtly and can be difficult to detect simply because they are part of the fabric of school life. They are part of what pupils, teachers and parents take for granted about the school.

To change school discipline means looking at how these influences operate. This involves the school taking a fresh look at itself. This is easier when there is a new headteacher or other senior member of staff. However, it is possible for established staff to stand back and look clearly at what is routine and taken for granted. Newcomers are often sensitive to a school's atmosphere and might be turned to for information. However, learning to review normal practice by looking at underlying influences and attitudes is a valuable skill for any teacher. *Action on Policy* papers give ideas about how to take a new look at the school and about who might be involved in the process.

4

# TRANSMITTING THE DISCIPLINE MESSAGE

A school transmits its discipline message in two ways:

- on paper
- by the actions of staff.

Both are important. This Chapter identifies the main ways in which the discipline message is transmitted. It offers suggestions for checking that the message which is being transmitted is the one intended.

## SCHOOL RULES

Rules lie at the heart of a school's discipline message. The rules on paper are often the introduction for pupils, parents and staff to what the school considers important. The checklist below offers ideas for checking that the message being transmitted by your school's rules is both positive and relevant.

### *Rules checklist*

- ✓ Are the rules framed positively? Rules such as *Be polite* or *Arrive on time* convey expectation of good behaviour. A list of 'don'ts' set up expectations of confrontation and trouble.
- ✓ Are all the rules essential? Could you justify every one? Having too many rules devalues their significance.
- ✓ Is the rationale for each rule made explicit? People are more likely to stick to rules if they know why they are necessary.
- ✓ Have the rules been decided by the school as a community? If pupils, parents and staff are involved in setting rules and reviewing them, it increases the likelihood of their being followed. It also signals a group responsibility for discipline rather than an us and them approach.
- ✓ Are the rules on paper really those which matter in practice? An analysis of punishment logs will tell you.

Rules need to be reviewed regularly if they are to be owned by pupils and staff.

## SANCTIONS AND REWARDS

Schools have sanctions which come into play if rules are broken. Few schools have rewards for obeying rules. Research shows that teachers are very sparing in their use of praise and other rewards. What would be the pros and cons of recognising the good behaviour of individual pupils and classes? For example, rewards such as a special day out for the best behaved classes in the lower school could help improve class discipline. They might also foster unhealthy rivalry.

What do rewards convey:

- that some pupils are better than others?
- that good behaviour is noticed, welcomed and recognised?

Some schools have experimented with rewards which recognise good behaviour by giving the pupils increased responsibility. For example, one school had a day devoted to charities' activities where pupils were free to choose both the charity to support and the kind of activity to raise funds. It is difficult to develop rewards which are fair and yet do not identify individuals or groups as better than others. Fairness is important to pupils where rewards are concerned.

Pupils also respond to sanctions which are fair. The punishment should fit the crime. However, what the school defines as an offence may have complex roots in the school's discipline history. This history is not always apparent or understood by pupils. The punishment may then seem an unfair over-reaction unless it is accompanied by an explanation. Similarly, where 'crimes' have accumulated, the seriousness of this needs to be explained to the pupil concerned. Purposeful activity, withdrawal of privileges and school contact with parents are usually more effective than punishment exercises such as copying from a text.

What do the sanctions used in your school convey? Are they intended to minimise disruption to school work by removing the offending pupil from the main areas of the school? Are they intended to let everyone know that a pupil has misbehaved? Do they punish teachers by involving them in laborious record keeping?

Talking to staff and pupils about the message being transmitted by school sanctions can generate new ideas and perhaps increase the effectiveness of some sanctions. Below are some ideas for checking the message being transmitted.

***What message is transmitted by your sanctions?***

- ☐ Is there a hierarchy of sanctions? If there is a hierarchy, how has it been established? Is the school clearly communicating that some offences are more serious than others? It is important that the punishment is seen to fit the crime.
- ☐ Is there a standard use of sanctions across departments? If not, pupils may feel unfairly treated. Establishing common standards needs the active involvement of all teachers; otherwise teachers may feel restricted and not apply sanctions consistently.
- ☐ How important is the freedom of subject departments to develop and implement sanctions? Schools need to balance teachers' individual levels of tolerance and whole school rules and sanctions. What sanctions are applied outside the classroom and by whom?
- ☐ At what stage do senior staff become involved in punishments? Involvement at an early stage signals a concern about discipline in general. Involvement only when serious offences have been committed signals that an offence is indeed serious. What is appropriate for your school?

## THE SCHOOL BROCHURE

The school brochure goes to pupils, parents and staff. It will convey an image of the school in what it says and in the way it says it. Those responsible for writing the brochure will be able to read it easily and understand its message. Others may have problems and extract messages which were not intended. For example, compare the tone, language and discipline message of the following two extracts:

> *"The school is a close-knit community of pupils, parents and teachers. It seeks the support of the family in educating all the young people in its area."*

> *"Pupils are expected to bring the equipment needed for their lessons, to return homework on time and behave in such a way that their work can be done without disturbing others. Any pupil failing to do this will be given a row (reprimand) and warned that unless they improve they will be punished."*

Overall, the first extract conveys a caring, sharing ethos; the second conveys an expectation of trouble. These may or may not be the intended messages. The point is that texts convey all kinds of messages. They also make assumptions about their readers. Try asking new pupils, parents and staff what they think about the brochure. Senior staff might find it a useful exercise to uncover these messages and assumptions. Below are some questions to ask.

### *The language of the school brochure*

- ☐ How many simple, short sentences does it contain?
- ☐ How many complex sentences with more than one subordinate clause are there?
- ☐ How much educational jargon can you spot? For example: differentiation, continuous assessment, learning outcomes, opportunities for progression
- ☐ Is good discipline spelt out — or is it assumed to be the absence of indiscipline?
- ☐ Are there any drawings, photographs or illustrations?
- ☐ In short, is it written in an easy-to-read style?

## POLICY AND PRACTICE

A clear statement of rules, sanctions and rewards and an attractive brochure are important ways of transmitting the discipline message. They are only part of the story.

All staff are important transmitters of discipline standards. Their actions, words and behaviour in the classroom and around the school convey a message too. For example, a teacher who ignores indiscipline in corridors and in the playground is conveying a very powerful message about lack of interest and concern for pupils outside the classroom. Conversely, staff who regard discipline outside their

classroom as being as important as discipline within it are conveying an important message too. Where staff have special status in regard to discipline, their actions are especially important. This means that heads of department, guidance staff and the senior management team are key.

Chapter 3 identified key influences on discipline: expectations about pupils, the senior management style, the autonomy of subject departments: the role of guidance and expectations about parents. These are part of the context which helps to set standards.

Changing the school's discipline message means understanding how these ingredients affect discipline. Without this understanding, changing the policy on paper will be ineffective. Chapter 5 suggests ways in which a school could change its discipline message.

## *SUMMARY*

This Chapter has stressed that schools transmit their discipline message in two ways, on paper and by the actions of staff. The most important message on paper is the one transmitted by school rules. A rules checklist is provided on page 12 and involving pupils in deciding about the key rules is suggested. All schools have sanctions which come into play if rules are broken but few schools have rewards for good behaviour. The chapter identified questions about fairness and appropriateness of sanctions and rewards for schools to consider.

The school can convey unintended messages about itself by the way it communicates with parents and others. Analysing the school brochure can alert staff to the kind of image being transmitted: so too can analysing typical home–school communications.

Teachers' actions, words and behaviour send important signals about discipline. These speak louder than any rules, sanctions or rewards about what discipline standards really are. Any changes in paper policy, rules, sanctions and rewards will be meaningless unless staff believe in them, and act on them.

5

# CHANGING THE DISCIPLINE MESSAGE

Studies into what makes for successful change in schools show that the need for change has to be recognised and supported by the school as a whole. No organisation, particularly one as complex as a school, can change its culture, policy and practice overnight. Change takes time. If the commitment is there, it can happen. To be successful, change has to be owned by the whole school community.

## MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

Changing a school's discipline message is a complex task involving teachers, pupils and parents. In such a fundamental aspect of school life, the leadership of the headteacher is essential. In the SCRE research, the teachers in a school that had turned its discipline round were unanimous in pointing to the key role of the headteacher. Typical comments were:

> *"The headteacher drives the school."*
>
> *"Discipline has to start at the top. Our headteacher decided from the start that the school was going to be a well run school."*
>
> *"It came from the top."*

However, the headteacher alone cannot change things. The commitment and enthusiasm of others needs to be generated and harnessed productively. A team approach is the goal.

## GETTING COMMITMENT

There are many competing demands on time. It is important, therefore, to see improving discipline *not* as another demand but as something which underpins all the things which a school does. It is not an optional extra. A school which has effective discipline is more able to deal with:

- curriculum change
- changes in assessment
- competition from other schools.

Curriculum provision and assessment practice in themselves send powerful signals to pupils about how they are valued by the school. Research has demonstrated, for example, how setting and streaming can promote anti-school sub-cultures among pupils who are in bottom groups by labelling them as less able, or not valued. A curriculum provision to which *all* pupils are entitled is therefore an important influence on a school's disciplinary climate.

A school with effective discipline will be attractive to parents. This booklet began by stressing that discipline was a means to an end — academic success for pupils. It is also an end in itself, the personal and social development of pupils. Schools which demonstrate their interest in and commitment to pupils' personal and social

development as well as to their academic attainments, are likely to find favour with parents. Studies of parental choice of school show children's safety, well-being and happiness to be important factors.

## *STARTING POINTS FOR WORKING WITH STAFF, PUPILS AND PARENTS*

☐ ***Building discipline into the development plan***

One way of structuring a review of discipline policy and practice is to build this into the school development plan. A school might decide to analyse communications with parents, for instance, or the kinds of offences which teachers most commonly deal with. This would reveal any mismatch between intention and practice. New targets could be set; for example, to increase positive communications with parents and people could be involved in working out how to achieve them.

☐ ***Involving pupils***

A group of pupils might be asked to write their version of the school brochure. First year pupils could draw up a guide to discipline for the next year's new intake. This would identify the important rules, sanctions and rewards for existing pupils.

☐ ***Involving the school board***

Governing bodies or school boards could help develop the school brochure. This kind of task might lead to a discussion of rules, sanctions and rewards, and be a step towards involving parents more actively in discipline matters.

☐ ***Different starting points***

Every school will have its own starting point because every school is different. The *Action on Policy* papers expand a little on these ideas. Whatever starting point is chosen, the headteacher has a vital role to play. Getting commitment, supporting initiatives from staff, pupils and parents and keeping the momentum going, have been suggested as key goals for headteachers.

## *TO SUM UP*

School discipline is influenced by:

- teachers' expectations about pupils
- senior management style
- the degree of independence of subject departments
- the role of guidance
- teachers' expectations about parents.

The strongest of these influences is the teachers' expectations about pupils. Accordingly, this could be the starting point for analysing a school's discipline message.

## STARTING TO ANALYSE THE DISCIPLINE MESSAGE

One way to begin would be by involving the staff in looking at rules and sanctions in terms of the kind of expectations being transmitted. For example, some messages to pupils and to staff are:

- pupils are going to cause trouble — so let us spell out what they can and cannot do and who is in control
- pupils are welcome and valued — so we will have a few rules and signal everyone's involvement in keeping a friendly, productive atmosphere
- pupils know how to behave — we do not need to spell it out.

These are just a few examples of messages that can be conveyed through rules and sanctions in the school. The next stage would be to discuss with staff whether the message being conveyed was the one intended. If it was, then was it a useful message? If it was not, a starting point for change has been identified. How to change, in what direction and who to involve are all decisions for individual schools. The *Action on Policy* papers give ideas and each school will come up with its own blend of ingredients to suit its own circumstances. A checklist to analyse the discipline message and to plan developments might help.

***Discipline message checklist: some examples from different schools***

| *Message conveyed* | *Message Intended?* | *Message evident in practice?* | *Ideas/plans* |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Pupils valued as responsible members of the school community. | √ | Not entirely. No pupil involvement in discussion about key rules. Rationale for rules not explained. | Raise with guidance staff. Can we build discussion about rules into social education? Can pupils be involved in formulating rules through pupil council? |
| • Subject departments can set their own rules. | X | Unintended message leading to confusion about responsibility for corridors, stairs etc. | Meet with department heads, discuss independence vs standards. Use *Action on Policy 4* as a discussion starter. |
| • Senior staff actively involved in all levels of school discipline. | √ | Yes. Regularly seen around the school. Analysis of diary *(Action on Policy 3)* supports this message. Also positive feedback from staff. | No new action. Praise senior management team at next meeting for high profile and positive effects. |
| • School expects pupils to be unprepared for school discipline. | ? | ? | ? |

Schools could develop their own checklists, filling in the messages being conveyed, their accuracy and effectiveness.

Changing the school's rules and sanctions is relatively easy. It is also ineffective unless schools understand *why* they operate in the way they do. This means that the school has to examine what it necessarily has to take for granted in its day-to-day operations. This demands time and effort but it is worth it. Schooling affects the life chances of all young people. Effective discipline is one way of maximising these life chances.

## *PUBLICATIONS*

The research on which this pack is based is reported in the following publications.

JOHNSTONE M and MUNN P (1992) *Discipline in Scottish Secondary Schools.* Available from SCRE, 15 St John Street, Edinburgh EH8 8JR, Scotland. Price £6.50.

MUNN P and JOHNSTONE M (1992) *Discipline in Scottish Schools, Interchange Number 6.* Available free from the SOED Dissemination Officer, SCRE, 15 St John Street, Edinburgh EH8 8JR, Scotland.

MUNN P, JOHNSTONE M and CHALMERS V. (1992) *Effective Discipline in Secondary Schools and Classrooms*, London: Paul Chapman. Available from Paul Chapman or bookshops. Price £12.95.

MUNN P, JOHNSTONE M and CHALMERS V (1992) *Effective Discipline in Primary Schools and Classrooms.* London: Paul Chapman. Available from Paul Chapman or bookshops. Price £12.95.

## Resource materials: summary

This is a summary list of some of the main resource materials relevant to discipline. Fuller details of these materials are on Information Sheet 2. Contact your teachers' centre or advisory service for information about local availability of these materials.

| *Titles:* | *Dealing with Disaffection* | *GTC probationer materials* | *The Positive Teaching Package* | *Preventative Approaches to Disruption* | *Promoting Positive Behaviour* | *Skills for Adole-scence* | *Working Together: Parents and Teachers* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pack contains:** | | | | | | | |
| **Units** | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| **Notes/manual** | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Video** | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| **Activities** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Handouts** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Suitable for:** | | | | | | | |
| **The whole school** | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| **Classroom management** | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| **Personal and social development** | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | |
| **Involving parents** | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Training in use of materials needed or advised** | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |

## Resource materials: details

The materials listed can be developed to suit your own school's needs. They need not necessarily be used as an entire programme. Most give advice on alternative ways of using the material. They may provide a springboard for your own ideas for staff development. A number of them are expensive and it would be advisable to find out how these packs have been used in other schools in your region. Price bands listed are: A (over £50), B (£10-£50), C (under £10).

***DEALING WITH DISAFFECTION: Practical Responses to School-Related Issues (1992). Price band B.***

Tim Pickles

Harlow: Longman

**Contact Point:** Longman Group UK Ltd, 6th Floor, Westgate House, The High, Harlow, Essex CM20 1YR.

This book offers resource materials to enable the harmonious resolution of conflict between the students and the school. Suggestions for an inter-agency approach are also put forward where problems are complex.

***GTC SCOTLAND PROBATIONER MATERIALS***

**Contact Point:** GTC Scotland, 5 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5AF.

A package of materials is offered to improve the quality of the two year probationary period served by Scottish teachers.

Two videos have been produced to date:

*Probation on the Inside* (1991) (Price band B): comes with OHPs and discussion sheets.

*Starting to teach* (1991) (Price band B): for headteachers and describes a probation induction scheme in a Scottish secondary school.

Written materials include:

*The Management of Probation* — based on interviews with young Scots teachers.

*A Headteacher's Package* — offers advice on the probationary period.

*Welcome to Teaching: For First Year Probationer Teachers* — a pack of training units available to all new teachers in either the nursery/primary or secondary version.

*Support Materials for Probationer Teachers* — available to headteachers to enable them to provide appropriate staff development for beginning teachers.

***THE POSITIVE TEACHING PACKAGE (1991). Price band A.***

Kevin Wheldall and Frank Merret

The Centre for Child Study, University of Birmingham

**Contact Point:** Positive Products, PO Box 45, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 3BX.

The Positive Teaching Package is produced by the same authors of BATPACK and BATSAC. It is a skills-based course of five units which can be taught in 1¼ hour sessions.
The pack includes

- a general instruction manual
- a scripted teaching manual
- a training video of classroom sequences
- OHP masters
- a copy of *Positive Teaching in the Secondary School*
- a starter pack of course unit notes to train a group of up to 15 teachers (supplementary packs are available) and additional books.

Tutor training is not required but schools may wish to contact their region to see if trained tutors are available.

***PREVENTATIVE APPROACHES TO DISRUPTION: DEVELOPING TEACHING SKILLS [PAD] (1986). Price band A.***

Barry Chisholm, David Kearney, Grenville Knight, Howard Little, Susan Morris and David Tweddle.

**Contact Point:** NFER-Nelson Publishing Co Ltd, Customer Services, Darvile House, No 2 Oxford Road East, Windsor SL4 1DF.

PAD is concerned with staff development in classroom management skills. It is intended to be seen as part of the whole school staff development plan. PAD consists of a manual containing six units. The units have study materials, which are handouts linked to related activities. Related activities consist of notes for tutors and handouts for course participants. The course tutor can be a member of school staff and the manual contains guidelines for tutors on planning, running and evaluating the course. There is an accompanying video to buy (price band A) or to rent.

***PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR: In the Secondary School (1992). Price band A.***

A McLean

Strathclyde Regional Council Psychological Service, Dunbarton Division

**Contact Point**: Sales and Publications, Faculty of Education, Strathclyde University, Jordanhill Campus, Southbrae Drive, Glasgow G13 1PP.

PPB is a programme which can form part of whole school staff and an individual teacher development. The course consists of 12 units which include guides for group leaders to each unit, activity and information papers. Each unit also offers follow up ideas. There is an accompanying training video and a background reading booklet. The group leader may be a member of the school staff.

***SKILLS FOR ADOLESCENCE (1990)*** • Curriculum Guide; • Activities and Assignments *(price band B each);* • Student Textbook; • Parent Textbook; • Parent Guide *(price band C each)*

SFA is a joint programme of LIONS CLUBS and TACADE

**Contact Point:** TACADE, 1 Hulme Place, The Crescent, Salford, Manchester M5 4QA.

SFA is intended for 11–14 year olds and there is an emphasis on preventing drug and alcohol abuse by helping pupils develop self-esteem and self-discipline. An manual offering instructions for teaching the course of seven units is included. Each unit involves classroom activities for which materials are provided. SFA aims to create a supportive school–community team and extensive parental involvement forms part of the programme. School staff must undergo training to teach the course.

A video (price band B) and a compilation of articles about SFA, Skills for Adolescence: from the Chalk Face, (price band C) are also available for teachers who want to begin or develop work with SFA.

***WORKING TOGETHER: Parents and Teachers (1993). Price band C.***

Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum: Committee on School and Community

**Contact Point:** SCCC, Information and Marketing Services, Gardyne Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 1NY.

This pack offers ideas for ways in which parents and teachers working together can aim for a partnership in supporting children's learning. Initially, school staff could use the pack to reflect upon the school's current practice beofre they engage in workshop sessions with parents. There are four sessions which can help schools work towards a development plan which will promote a more effective home/school partnership.

# Reviews

If you are interested in reading more, the following materials contain information which could be a useful starting point to a wide and complex literature about whole-school and classroom approaches to discipline.

### *Reviews*

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (1989). *Discipline in Schools: Report of the Committee of Enquiry chaired by Lord Elton.* London: HMSO.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (1987). *Good Behaviour and Discipline in School. Education Observed* 5. Publication Despatch Centre, Canons Park, Honeypot Lane, Stanemore. (Contains an appendix listing survey reports by HMI from 1977 onwards which make significant reference to behaviour and discipline).

DOCKING, J W (1987). *Control and Discipline in Schools: Perspectives and Approaches.* London: Harper and Row.

GRAHAM, J (1988). *Schools, Disruptive Behaviour and Delinquency. Home Office Research Study 96.* London: HMSO.

JOHNSTONE, M and MUNN, P (1987). *Discipline in School: A Review of 'Causes' and 'Cures'.* Edinburgh: SCRE.

### *Useful overviews*

RICHARDS, L (Ed) (1989). *The Best of SET: Discipline.* New Zealand Council for Education Research and the Australian Council for Educational Research. (A pack of 15 articles on various discipline issues).

WOLFENDALE, S and BRYANS, T (1989). *Managing Behaviour: A Practical framework for schools.* NARE Publications Stafford. (The National Association for Remedial Education, Central Office, 2 Litchfield Road, Stafford, ST17 4JX. This booklet could be used as a stimulus and framework for action on managing behaviour. References and a list of INSET materials are provided).

### *School ethos*

Discipline is an important element of school ethos. Key government publications already in schools in Scotland are:

SCOTTISH OFFICE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (1991). Management of Educational Resources 5. *The Role of School Development Plans in Managing School Effectiveness.* Edinburgh: HMSO.

SCOTTISH OFFICE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (1992). *Using Ethos Indicators in Secondary School Self-Evaluation: Taking Account of the Views of Pupils, Parents and Teachers.* School Development Planning Support Materials. Edinburgh: HMSO.

SCOTTISH OFFICE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (1992). *Using Ethos Indicators in Primary School Self-Evaluation: Taking Account of the Views of Pupils, Parents and Teachers.* School Development Planning Support Materials. Edinburgh: HMSO.

SCOTTISH OFFICE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (1993). *Taking Account of the Views of Parents, Pupils and Teachers in School Self-Evaluation.* Glasgow: Quality in Education Centre, Faculty of Education, Strathclyde University.

Key publications from the Department of Education and Science (now Department for Education) are:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (1989). HARGREAVES D H *et al. Planning for School Development: Advice to Governors, Headteachers and Teachers.* London: DES publications.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (1991). *Development Planning: Practical Guide: Advice to Governors, Headteachers and Teachers.* London: DES publications. This publication is based on HARGREAVES, D H and HOPKINS, D (1991). *Empowered School: Management and Practice of Development Planning.* Cassell

# Pupils and the Discipline Message

The starting point for improving discipline is to **analyse the discipline message** the school is already transmitting. Once a school begins to investigate this it can see the extent of match and mismatch between what is intended and what really happens. The pupils themselves will have views about the discipline message. Asking them about this will help uncover the reality of discipline for pupils. Before investigating the pupils' views it is important to think through three aspects of any analysis:

- **how** is it to be done
- **what** the focus will be
- the **purpose** of the analysis — how it will feed into the review of discipline policy.

## *Idea: Ask pupils what they think about school discipline*

***• How could this be done?***

- get a group of pupils from each year to write about it
- ask a group of pupils to develop a questionnaire to be completed by a sample of pupils in the school
- make discussion of school discipline part of the social education programme

Think about who will analyse the results and write up a brief report before starting out. Could such an exercise be part of a practical investigation in social studies?

***• What could the focus be?***

Pupils could be asked to:

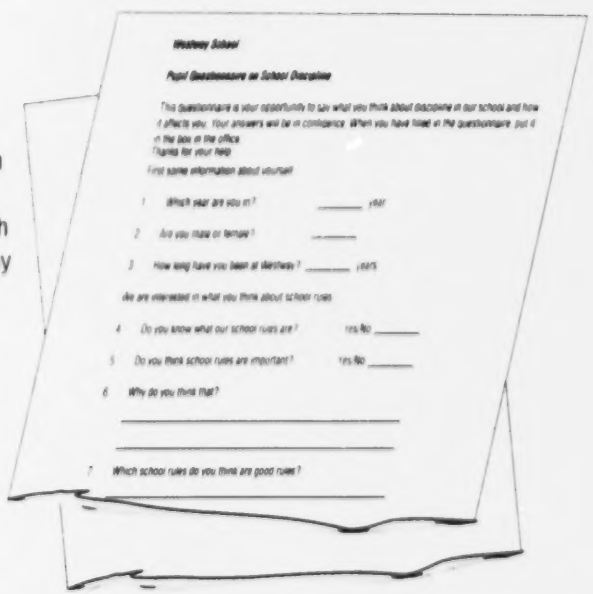
- identify what for them important school rules should be
- explain why they think these rules are important
- identify effective strategies for dealing with rule breakers.

***• What is the purpose?***

Involving pupils in this way signals that:

- the staff are interested in their views
- pupils are seen as active members of the school community
- their views will be taken into account in developing school rules and sanctions.

It also sets up expectations of change for both pupils and staff. This may worry staff unless they are consulted and involved.



Pupil Questionnaire on School Discipline

This questionnaire is your opportunity to say what you think about discipline in our school and how it affects you. Your answers will be in confidence. When you have filled in the questionnaire, put it in the box in the office.
Thanks for your help.

First some information about yourself.

1 Which year are you in? _____ year

2 Are you male or female? _____

3 How long have you been at Wellway? _____ years

We are interested in what you think about school rules.

4 Do you know what our school rules are? yes/no _____

5 Do you think school rules are important? yes/no _____

6 Why do you think that?

_____

_____

7 Which school rules do you think are good rules?

_____

# Parents and the Discipline Message

Schools cannot work in isolation. They need the help and support of parents if discipline is to be effective. Schools can see parents as junior and passive partners, perhaps only to be involved when pupils are causing problems. Two ideas are suggested for **exploring expectations about parental involvement**. They are starting points. Schools will have their own ideas too. As in *Action on Policy 1*, it is important to think through three aspects of any analysis:

- **how** is it to be done
- **what** the focus will be
- the **purpose** of the analysis — how it will feed into the review of discipline policy.

## Idea 1: Investigate an aspect of home–school relations

***• How could this be done?***

– analyse typical communications between home and school over, say, a term.

***• What is the focus of analysis?***

– the content of communications
– the style of communication
– the tone of communication.

Remember to consider too, what sorts of communications parents offer about their children.

Under *content*, identify the main topics of typical communications. Are they, for instance:

– praise for the pupil, year group or school achievements?
– complaints about individual pupil's behaviour and attitude?
– requests for active involvement in various aspects of school life?
– factual information about the school, for example holidays, subject choices, staff complement?

Where pupil behaviour is the topic, is it taken for granted that parents share the school expectations?

Under *style*, ask, for example:

– is the design of texts attractive — well spaced, good size of print, not too cramped?
– are sentences short and straightforward? What are you assuming about parents' knowledge and familiarity with school procedures?
– are texts available in languages other than English?

Under *tone*, ask:

– is the tone friendly, welcoming, distant, cool?
– is the language free of jargon?
– is the message one that parents are junior partners expected to support the school's way of doing things?



See overleaf ►

***• What is the purpose?***

Analysing home–school communication by asking the kinds of questions suggested, will give you a flavour of the kinds of expectations being transmitted in print. If your intention is to promote parents as partners in their children's schooling, answering these questions will indicate the kind of partnership being transmitted. You can then judge whether this is the intended message.

## *Idea 2: Evaluate parents' evenings*

The printed word is only one means of communication. Personal contact is important too. One important opportunity for home–school contact is parents' evenings. Evaluating these could identify strengths of current arrangements and areas for improvement.

***• How could this be done?***

- design a simple evaluation form
- ask parents attending an evening to complete it and hand it in before they leave
- have clearly displayed boxes for returned forms and some staff primed to encourage parents to complete and return forms.

***• What should be the focus of the evaluation?***

Think about including questions on:

- administrative arrangements
- time available to talk to staff
- privacy
- quality of information exchanged
- purpose of parents' evenings.

***• What is the purpose?***

Such an exercise signals an intention to take parents' views seriously, recognising their important role in their children's education. It will also provide a source of ideas for ways of improving parents' evenings. Action needs to be taken and be seen to be taken after such an evaluation — otherwise it will be seen as no more than a public relations exercise.

## *Who to involve?*

Who to involve in these various tasks — collecting pupils' views, analysing home-school communication, and evaluating parents' evenings — needs careful thought. *Action on Policy 5* gives some suggestions. School board members, governors and members of the parent–teacher association could be involved, for instance, in helping design the evaluation of parents' evenings and/or in analysing home–school communications.

## Management Style

All staff have responsibilities for sustaining good discipline. However, the **actions of the senior management team and of heads of department** are especially important. The activity suggested below is designed to help these staff analyse the messages about discipline they are wittingly or unwittingly transmitting. This can be done as an individual exercise or as a group activity.

### Idea: Keep a diary for one week of involvement in discipline matters

Design the diary so that at the end of the week you will be able to answer the following questions:

- *How many activities to promote good discipline were you involved in?*

For example, being seen around potential trouble spots; involved in curriculum development.

- *How often were you involved in dealing with indiscipline:*

a) in the classroom b) around the school?

- *Is the balance between actively promoting good discipline and dealing with indiscipline about right as far as you are concerned?*
- *Have the outcomes of your involvement in dealing with indiscipline been fed back:*

a) to guidance staff b) to other staff concerned?

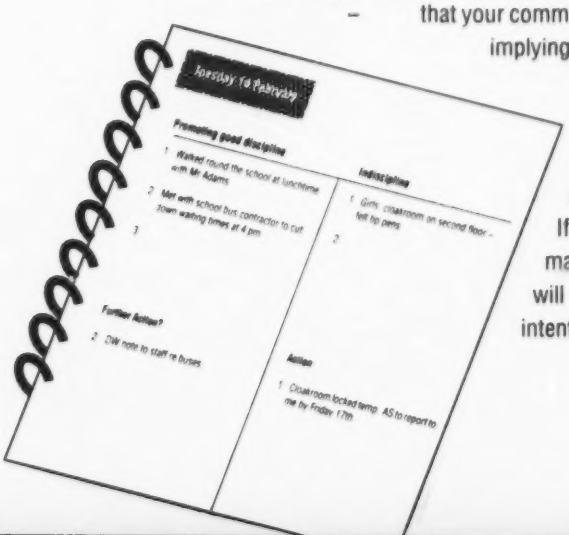
- *Are there patterns to your involvement in dealing with indiscipline in terms of:*

a) kinds of offences b) pupil year groups and [for senior management team] c) subject departments?

- *Looking back over the week as a whole, what kind of message does your diary tell you that you have been transmitting?*

For example:

- that you are more concerned with dealing with indiscipline than promoting good discipline?
- that you are likely to be involved only in serious incidents?
- that a disproportionate amount of your time is spent on a small number of pupils?
- that your communication with staff over discipline incidents is poor, implying that you are in charge and that the teacher's role is to refer incidents to you?


Tuesday 14 February
Promoting good discipline
1. Walked round the school at lunchtime with Mr Adams
2. Met with school bus contractor to cut down waiting times at 4 pm
3
Further Action?
2. DW note to staff re buses
Indiscipline
1. Girls' cloakroom on second floor – felt tip pens
2
Action
1. Cloakroom locked temp. AS to report to me by Friday 17th

- *If you have done this as a group, combine the data and look for similarities and differences in experiences. What are these telling the group?*

If your analysis confirms that intention and reality match, all well and good. If there are mismatches, how will you change your practice to bring it closer to your intentions?

## Common Standards

**Idea: Set aside some or all of a head of departments' meeting to discuss discipline in subject departments**

Key questions which could be debated are:

***1 Should there be common standards across departments?***

*• Would you agree that the benefits of common standards are:*
- pupils know what is expected?
- teachers feel confident in knowing what is expected?
- teachers will be backed by colleagues from other departments if indiscipline occurs?
- teachers feel able to apply common standards outside their own classroom?

*• What are the drawbacks of trying to achieve common standards?*
- If there are to be common standards, how will these be (a) agreed (b) enforced?

***2 Should there be diversity?***

*• Would you agree that the benefits of different standards in departments are:*
- it matches the kind of work expected from pupils?
- it emphasises the professional responsibility of individual teachers for discipline?
- it strengthens departmental solidarity?

*• What are the drawbacks of diversity?*
- Where will this be appropriate and why?
- Are there limits to set?

***3 Schools operate successful discipline policies with different systems. What message about discipline is your system transmitting?***

*• Is it that:*
- discipline is everyone's responsibility?
- indiscipline is indiscipline wherever it happens?
- special circumstances demand special rules?
- pupils need to recognise special circumstances and adapt accordingly?

***4 Again, if intention and reality match, all well and good. If there are mismatches how will practice change to bring the two closer together?***

## Getting Commitment to Change

One way of getting commitment to change is to **involve those most directly affected**. This means valuing all shades of opinion, however antithetical to your own and trying to harness criticism in a way that is constructive and productive. Working with people is the goal. Think about the following if you are contemplating a review and development of school discipline.

***1 Who will be involved in the review?***

- pupils
- parents
- teachers
- school boards/governing bodies
- parent–teacher associations
- non-teaching staff

***2 Are there particular kinds of people to be involved?***

- those new to the school: first year pupils; beginning teachers; experienced teachers coming from other schools.
- those who do not share the dominant school values. They can be helpful in sharpening up those values and justifying them. Active involvement may also decrease their disaffection from school.
- those who have special responsibilities for discipline, for example, school board members, governors, heads of department, a member of the senior management team, senior pupils, pastoral care staff.
- those who seem to have particular difficulties in maintaining effective discipline. They can bring an important perspective to the actuality of school life.

***3 How are these designated to be involved?***

- working groups
- practical tasks and activities (*Action on Policy 1, 2, 3* and *4* give ideas)
- timetabled meetings to carry out agreed tasks.

***4 How will the effectiveness of review and development be judged? Consider:***

- a clear timetable for review, recommendations and implementation.
- agreeing in advance some criteria of effectiveness, such as a higher profile to promoting good discipline.
- setting targets which are readily identifiable.

***5 What should the headteacher's role be?***

- to chair the review OR
- to support it but not actively participate OR
- the driving force?

*'It's a friendly set-up, caring for the children. It does seem to be true.'*

*'I enjoy the feeling of the whole school/community approach and the support is great.'*

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